Eros in Poetry and Prose: Book Eleven

Compiled and edited by

Patrick Bruskiewich

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Eros in Poetry and Prose

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Cover: The Allegory of the Apple …

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By the time we had left Chicago I had made my decision … this summer I was going to be feral. I would lose my virginity as a way of getting back at my mother. In retrospect this was a stupid decision which thankfully played … but not fully. By the end of the summer I would know a bit more about boys … yet still wore my halo.

Charlotte

The Eros in Poetry and Prose Series

Eros in literature is one of the finest and most sublime way to share one's love.

The purpose of the ***Eros in Poetry and Prose*** Series is to share some of the most amorous and enticing pieces of poetry, prose and art to be found in the English Speaking World.

This is the Eleventh book in the series. The release of this edition of ***Eros in Poetry and Prose*** coincides with Valentine's Day 2025.

In this edition you will find original poems and pieces of prose all meant to tickle your fancy ...

Enjoy!

Patrick Bruskiewich
Vancouver, BC, Canada

Eros in Poetry

Wonder Why It Is by Aki Kurosawa

It is the middle of the night
and I cannot sleep
It is too hot to sleep.
The moisture in the air sticks
my panties to my bare skin –
so I take them off
and fan myself all over.
The cold air arouses me
And so with fan in one hand
I tickle myself with the other,
Seeking pleasure in every fold of my skin
Now I am even hotter than before but …
Really I don't mind it …
I will take a cold bath later
After I have spent myself …
And soap myself all over …
And wonder why it is
I am always alone when I am
so –
ar
ous
ed!

Pictorial: A Beautiful Composition

Perhaps I am twice or more … by Patrick Bruskiewich

I am not half the man I used to be
Nor one in his entirety
Perhaps I am twice or more …

With the passage of time
I have learned so much
That I did not know before

When I was much younger
No longer do I need to run
Nor prove my worth …

To get to where I am going.

Pictorial: Oh how much she loves him …

The Pomegranate by Eavan Boland

The only legend I have ever loved is
the story of a daughter lost in hell.
And found and rescued there.
Love and blackmail are the gist of it.
Ceres and Persephone the names.
And the best thing about the legend is
I can enter it anywhere. And have.
As a child in exile in
a city of fogs and strange consonants,
I read it first and at first I was
an exiled child in the crackling dusk of
the underworld, the stars blighted. Later
I walked out in a summer twilight
searching for my daughter at bed-time.
When she came running I was ready
to make any bargain to keep her.
I carried her back past white beams
and wasps and honey-scented buddleias.
But I was Ceres then and I knew
winter was in store for every leaf
on every tree on that road.
Was inescapable for each one we passed. And for me.

It is winter
and the stars are hidden

.I climb the stairs and stand where I can see
my child asleep beside her teen magazines,
her can of Coke, her plate of uncut fruit.
The pomegranate! How did I forget it?
She could have come home and been safe
and ended the story and all
our heart-broken searching but she reached
out a hand and plucked a pomegranate.
She put out her hand and pulled down
the French sound for apple and
the noise of stone and the proof
that even in the place of death,
at the heart of legend, in the midst
of rocks full of unshed tears
ready to be diamonds by the time
the story was told, a child can be
hungry. I could warn her. There is still a chance.
The rain is cold. The road is flint-coloured.
The suburb has cars and cable television.
The veiled stars are above ground.
It is another world. But what else
can a mother give her daughter but such
beautiful rifts in time?
If I defer the grief I will diminish the gift.
The legend will be hers as well as mine.
She will enter it. As I have.
She will wake up. She will hold

the papery flushed skin in her hand.
And to her lips. I will say nothing.

I am a Pomegranate by Amber S.

I am a pomegranate.
cut me open.
break my outer skin.

inside of me is my fruit.
the meat of me.
hidden.

dig your fingers into me,
pulling me apart.
ripping me to pieces.

I do not want to be
in your mouth.
feel the heat of your breath.

chew me up.
spit me out.
and leave me empty.

Pictorial: Here … take it …

How to Cut a Pomegranate by Imtiaz Dharker

Never,' said my father,
'Never cut a pomegranate
through the heart. It will weep blood.
Treat it delicately, with respect.

Just slit the upper skin across four quarters.
This is a magic fruit,
so when you split it open, be prepared
for the jewels of the world to tumble out,
more precious than garnets,
more lustrous than rubies,
lit as if from inside.
Each jewel contains a living seed.
Separate one crystal
.Hold it up to catch the light.
Inside is a whole universe.
No common jewel can give you this.'

Afterwards, I tried to make necklaces
of pomegranate seeds.
The juice spurted out, bright crimson,
and stained my fingers, then my mouth.

I didn't mind. The juice tasted of gardens
I had never seen, voluptuous

with myrtle, lemon, jasmine,
and alive with parrots' wings.

The pomegranate reminded me
that somewhere I had another home.

In No Way So Grand by Patrick Bruskiewich

Nature can be described
in many ways,
but in no way so grand
as through the use of
mathematics.

And when we accept that
we may also eventually accept
that we are not more important
in the grand scheme of the universe
than a bird that flies overhead
or any other living creature
for that matter,
even an ant crawling at our feet.

If we accept this
then perhaps we can appreciate
what it means to think and
to have worthy ideas.

Pictorial: Pomegranates by Minna Keene

Circa 1910

Two Poems by Annie Campbell Huestis

On the Stair

As I went lonely up the stair
Ah me, the ghost that I saw there!
So bright and near it seemed to be,
It laid a hand with tender touch
On my sad eyes that wept too much,
And bent a wistful face to me,—
It was the friend whose heart I brake
With many a grief for my false sake.
The hand that sought to dry my tears
Had dried her own in earlier years—
The patient tears I made her shed.
The face that bent to comfort me
From the dark hall where none could see
Had smiled on me as she lay dead.
It was the friend I did not spare
Who met me on the lonely stair.
If I could live those years again
And break no trust, and give no pain,
And nobly grieve to see her die.
We could forget that she was dead,
And all the years so strangely fled,
And love this meeting, she and I;
But I was false as friend could be

And she comes back to comfort me.

The Little White Sun

The sky had a gray, gray _ face.
The touch of the mist was chill,
The earth was an eerie place,
For the wind moaned over the hill
;
But the brown earth laughed, and the sky turned blue,
When the little white sun came peeping through.
The wet leaves saw it and smiled,
The glad birds gave it a song
—
A cry from a heart, glee-wild.
And the echoes laug'h it along: -..
And the wind and I went whisthng, too, .
"
When the little white sun came peeping through. '
,
So, welcome the chill of rain V.
^'
And the world in its dreary guise
—
To have it over again.
That moment of sweet surprise.
When the brown earth laughs, and the sky turns blue,

As the little white sun comes peeping through.

Yuki … Yuki … Yuki … by Aki Kurosawa

Yesterday it snowed …
Today it snowed too …
Tomorrow it will snow again!

*Yuki … Yuki … Yuki …**

This should not be
a surprise, for it is
winter here in Japan.

Yuki … Yuki … Yuki …

It is supposed to be
cold and snowy, right …
up to our knees sometimes

Yuki … Yuki … Yuki …

Then here in bustling Tokyo,
It will decide to warm, and
winter knows it is time to go.

* Yuki is Japanese for snow

Pictorial: Something Pink and Beautiful

We are Counting Down the Days by William Webster

Oh my, are people flying around …
here in the Big Apple. It is cold
and so are New Yorkers. It is a big rout …
every day more bad news abounds.

North from DC the bad news creeps.
He wants to *Make America ~~Great~~ Goofy Again* …
all he seems to do is make people weep,
with anguish and wish it was back then …

We New Yorkers have warm hearts,
that are rich beyond words, his way …
he was never one of us … he lived apart.
He was a speculator and we were his play.

We are counting down the days …
we New Yorkers truly are.
When things can go back
to the way they once were …

That was After All, Her World by Patrick Bruskiewich

Tenderly, I unwrapped her as I would
a box of expensive dark
chocolate. If she wanted she could
have stopped me, and pushed us apart.

But she wanted the delight of it,
the joy of pure lust between her and I,
of being completely unashamed, nothing hid
from view. I kissed her here and there … she sighed.

No words were said, yet we understood
Through our soft touch, what brings her pleasures,
Without asking, she spread her legs wide and good,
to lay bare her splendour … her hidden treasures.

Her hair was fiery red … down there
Just like the long curly hair on her head
There she now lay for me, completely bare
Reclined … immodest on her warm, soft bed

I press forward, tickling her pink, softness … touched
with my lips and my tongue the hot flesh
that made her a girl … In a moment she gushed
all over my chin, and exclaimed that was the best …

Sex she had ever had with a boy …
I smiled knowing she really loved girls
quite often. That I was her first boy … at her tender age, a toy
is a toy, is a toy. That was after all, her world!

Eros in Prose

It was no big deal … by Isabella Montsouris

[**Montreal**] The first time I had sex was when I was seventeen. That summer I flew from Montreal to visit my cousin in Vancouver who was going to university. My cousin is three years older than me.

She and I had a candid talk about life and she asked me what I most wanted to do this summer. I told her I wanted to lose my virginity.

The following day she got one of her class mates to join us on Wreck beach and well … this picture tells it all, doesn't it? Her boyfriend took the picture.

We laid a beach towel down so I didn't get any sand inside of me. I was nervous as they all watched me. It happened so quickly … too quickly in fact.

He teased me with the tip of his penis for a few seconds. I got very wet and bothered as he did this. I could feel my labia swell … then he leaned forwarded.

I was really disappointed. He climaxed after three thrusts! In a panic I pushed him out of me … so he came all over my stomach. What a mess!

I laid back, closed my eyes and had to finish off my pleasure myself. With everyone watching I had an orgasm …

After it was all over … to be perfectly frank I did not feel any different except for a stinging feeling in my vagina where he had ripped my hymen. My cousin washed his semen off my stomach then took me by the hand. We both walked proudly down to the water's edge and went for a swim into the ocean.

I bled a little bit and hoped there were no sharks about ... I reached down and explored myself with my fingers. It tingled strangely, especially when I curled my fingers within myself.

After our swim we got dressed and left the boys at the beach and went back to her apartment where I took a cold shower and then slept the afternoon away. I can't say I enjoyed my first time ...I never saw the man ever again.

Really it was no big deal!

Totally Chill …by Sarah D

[**London**] So we were all around 16-17, in a UK college, attending what was probably the first life drawing class for all of us. The man modeling was in his forties, obviously did this often, and he was not shy in the slightest. He was chill. The teacher was weird and kept yelling at anyone who spoke out loud while drawing. It definitely made everything feel a lot more tense and awkward.

The lad next to me was one of the few males in our class, and one of two that were also straight. He had never seen another guy's privates before, and he was clearly struggling with the concept. I had a feeling it was something to do with the fact this guy was pretty devoutly religious also. The whole time, he was bright red in the face, and his whole body was shaking like a leaf.

Being a bit of a mother hen, I asked him if he was alright, and he said that he didn't feel well, and that he couldn't believe this was happening. Through the first two poses he did okay, although his line control was more off than normal, and there was just a big blurry mark around the genital area.

I gave him a bottle of cola from my bag and asked if he wanted to sit down. The teacher freaked out about us talking, but he just nodded and went to sit behind me. He then freaked out, upon realizing that everyone else was drawing the genitalia! He didn't realize we were supposed to, and for whatever reason, he became terrified.

The teacher had marched over by now to see why he was sitting out. She saw his drawing then went on an angry rant about artistic integrity, how childish he was, and about how the model was a precious resource that we had limited time with.

She forced this poor lad up and back to his easel, and she held his arm to direct him in drawing the genitalia. This poor boy stood looking like he was vibrating in fear as the woman guided his hand.

Then he just dropped. Like a sack of potatoes. The teacher managed to keep him from hitting the floor too hard, since she was holding his arm, and me and another girl rushed over to help her get him back into the chair. He woke up very quickly after a few seconds, overwhelmingly embarrassed, and he started making excuses. The teacher let him sit it out after that, where the poor guy just sat with his face in his hands, miserable for the next twenty minutes while we finished up and the completely unfazed model left.

This poor sixteen-year-old guy didn't turn up to life drawing classes after that. This teacher absolutely contributed to this student eventually dropping out. It's a shame, as he had a ton of promise in his other classes.

In my next college, our life drawing class was so much better. The room was warmer, more intimate, and had fewer students. We were allowed to chat amongst ourselves, including with the model, so long as we didn't make her laugh so much that she moved.

The model would even hang out in a robe with a cup of tea, looking at our work during our breaks. It was a totally different experience when everyone involved has a good sense of humor and is chill about the entire process!"This art studio was totally chill …

The Anxious Writer by Shatell Power

[**Vancouver**] I suffer from anxiety. I didn't know I was an anxious person until I was well into adulthood. It's my default state. For years, whirling thoughts have been my power generator, but this seems different from most other folks. I've always been viewed with suspicion, longsuffering, and irritation by a lot of other people. I'm hyper. I'm outspoken. I'm blunt. I'm loud. I take things too literally. I ask too many questions. I'm kinda … much. And even as a little kid I knew it. I knew I was weird and talked too much. and that the words and noises pouring out of my-mouth in a cascade were drowning whatever empathy others might feel for me. I saw faces harden, eyes roll, smiles shrivel into white-lipped aggravation, yet still my words fountained out of me in an attempt to appease, amuse, or elicit something other than hatred or disinterest.

I leaned to shut my mouth sometimes. I binged and purged on words, babbling nonstop some days, growing nonverbal on others. I learned to go within. Some speak of going within as a metaphor, but that's not how it is for me. In times of silence or waiting, I close my eyes and look at the inside of my eyelids, marveling at the hazy yellow-pink of sunlight through my skin. I press my hands against my ears and listen to the ka-chunk ka-chunk of my heartbeat, or to the gooshy sounds of myself swallowing, sound travelling from the back corners of my mouth and down my throat. I engage the tympanic membranes of my ears to hear roaring. I isolate different muscles of my body in a flex and release, flex and release, flex and release sequence. I listen to the teakettle screech of tinnitus. I press on my eyeballs and watch phosphenes float by. I hold a thermometer in my hand and will my temperature to change. I stare at the reflection of-my eyelashes in the coke bottle lens of my glasses. I count my steps in my mind, stare intently at the pores in my

skin and wiggle loose baby teeth with my tongue. I bang my head on my bedroom wall to experience the rhythm of sound. I bite my nails past the quick until blood wells up and I regretfully unclench my teeth and vow not to do it again. I go within again and again. So long as I can do so, I can never be bored. I was obsessed with words and sounds. I found words I liked and repeated them over and over again, enjoying the feel of them on my tongue, the way different sounds moved from throat to tongue to teeth to lips. I played with rhymes, and chanted as many- rhyming words as I could think of or invent. I got into trouble for this when bad words arose during the litany. I was told again and again not to say those words, so I practiced saying them to animals and trees instead of people. Geese don't care when you rhyme duck with fuck.

My mother sewed most of my clothes, and by the time I was three, I could read well enough to pick out clothing patterns in my own size. I read everything I could, from instructions on toilet cleaner to the westerns and Regency romance novels strewn about the house. I didn't always understand the words I was reading, but I read them, nonetheless, and I collected words like some people collect stamps, filing them away for later use.

I had no friends in elementary school. I was far too weird for most kids. My friends were nonhuman. I played. with chickens, pigs, dogs, cats, horses, goats, rabbits, and geese. I tracked down wildlife in the woods. I learned to mimic all sorts of birds. I understood how to communicate intentions with animals.

People, however, I could not figure out. I rescued snakes and frogs from kids who would hurt them, not understanding why anyone would ever kill or injure another living creature for fun. I studied other children at school and tried to understand what

it was that made them OK with one another, but not with me. I wanted to join in their conversations, to know what they were talking about, but they told me to go away. I had so many things I wanted to say, but no one wanted to hear them. I was never more lonelier than when I was surrounded by people.

Words burgeoned within me, so thick I could see them. When anyone spoke, my imagination supplied closed captioning. I watched words float by like ticker tape, spoken words translated into text by my accommodating brain. Conversation was a comic book with word balloons, and when I showered and let the water pour onto my eyelids, I saw newspaper print that I couldn't quite read.

I was supersaturated with words. Those words that wanted to spray like a fire hose, to tell stories, to share the joy of sounds, the flavours of words-those words had no place to go. But then I began writing. The first story I ever wrote was when I was seven years old. I was in grade two, and my teacher did not like me. She regularly used me as a cautionary example of how not to do things, and often contrasted my colouring homework with Jennifer's. Jennifer always chose the right colours and kept within the lines. My colours extended beyond the lines. Jennifer's colouring books had bright yellow ducks in red boots carrying black umbrellas. My ducks weren't yellow. They didn't wear bright red boots. My ducks were prickly creatures made of purple and black scribbles, and though I tried to stay inside the lines, my exuberance was too huge to be contained.

When my teacher read the first story I ever wrote, I saw something in her face she had never before directed my way. I saw admiration. "This is good," she said, and I marveled that this teacher-who disliked me so very much and who had beaten me with a leather strap-was moved by my words into admitting I was skillful at

something. I learned that my words on paper were perhaps my best chance at communicating with other people.

I entered my first writing contest when I was in grade four and won it. I was published in a national magazine, and I received $ 100 and a big silver medal in a velvet case. The peanut butter stain on the velvet captures that triumphant moment when I held my prize aloft in grubby hands. I exulted in the realization that people liked what I was writing. They liked it so much they even wanted other people to read it. I began writing for myself, as well. Not every story has to be shared.

I started collecting pen pals when I was in grade five. I learned I was better at keeping human friends on paper than I was in person. I wrote letters to people all over the world, learning what they did for fun, and sharing my own thoughts and experiences. For the first time in my life, I was being included in the conversations.

I have never had a problem with generating writing, with pouring words out onto paper or computer screens. Perhaps it's because of that anxiety which always simmers within me, keeping my mind bubbling and hot, albeit too fogged with steam to see everything clearly on occasion. When stew cooks on the stovetop, ingredients don't stay in orderly lines. Mushrooms, potatoes, and carrots tumble around one another in delicious chaos, getting their flavours all over one another. This is my mind. Messy words and ideas carom off one another within the stew pot of my skull.

I find it interesting that my hurly-burly of words, which irritate so many people, get described as lyrical once they hit the page rather than an eardrum.

Sometimes the anxiety grows too loud. The words circle within me in a cyclone and I am left sitting motionless in my chair, helpless to exorcise them. Agitation grows, though I look no different to myself in the mirror. My facial expression does not reveal the vortex inside me. There is only one thing at the forefront of my mind, and I don't want to see it anymore. How can I make it go away?

This is what it's like when executive dysfunction takes over. I dwell on only one thought, and it swirls around and around in my mind like the grey scum atop a pot of boiling potatoes. The inside of my mouth feels like I just ate cold french fries. My chest feels tight. My intrusive thought is all I can focus upon, even though there are so many things I need or want to do. If someone speaks to me, it's readily apparent I'm not being attentive.

How can I be when anxiety has left me with nothing but a worry? How can I make myself answer my emails, clean my room, meet a deadline, or remember to eat when this unwanted thought is taking up all of my attention and pushing everything else far below the surface?

In times like these, online writing groups help me. Writing sessions which supply prompts for free writing let me exorcise the demons and get to other ideas beneath the surface. Sometimes having someone else give me a word or a phrase to write about is enough to dispel the rumination and get my mind simmering merrily again. It means I can release the tension in my chest, relax the death grip of my jaw, and know I've accomplished something, in spite of it all. I am grateful for my ability to write and create. It's not a cure for my anxiety, but it is an excellent way of soothing it. {first published in *Open Minds Quarterly*}

Pictorial: Me and My Alter Ego

The Wisdom of the Heart by Henry Miller

Every book by an analyst gives us, in addition to the philosophy underlying his therapeutic, a glimpse into the nature of the analyst's own problem vis-à-vis life. The very fact of writing a book, indeed, is a recognition on the part of the analyst of the falsity of the patient- versus-analyst situation. In attempting, through the educative method, to enlarge his field of influence, the analyst is tacitly informing us of his desire to relinquish the unnecessary role of healer which has been thrust upon him. Though in fact he repeats every day to his patients the truth that they must heal themselves, actually what happens is that the list of patients grows with terrifying rapidity, so that sometimes the healer is obliged to seek another healer himself. Some analysts are just as pitiful and harassed specimens of humanity as the patients who come to them for relief. Many of them have confused the legitimate acceptance of a role with immolation, or vain sacrifice. Instead of exposing the secret of health and balance by example, they elect to adopt the lazier course, usually a disastrous one, of transmitting the secret to their patients. Instead of remaining human, they seek to cure and convert, to become life- giving saviors, only to find in the end that they have crucified themselves. If Christ died on the cross to inculcate the notion of sacrifice, it was to give significance to this inherent law of life, and not to have men follow his example. "Crucifixion is the law of life," says Howe, and it is true, but it must be understood symbolically, not literally.

Throughout his books (*I and Me; Time and the Child; War Dance*, by E. Graham Howe) it is the indirect or Oriental way of life which he stresses, and this attitude, it may also be said, is that of art. The art of living is based on rhythm, on give and take, ebb and flow, light and dark, life and death. By acceptance of all the aspects of life, good and bad, right and wrong, yours and mine, the static, defensive life, which is

what most people are cursed with, is converted into a dance, "the dance of life," as Havelock Ellis called it. The real function of the dance is

—*metamorphosis*. One can dance to sorrow or to joy; one can even dance abstractly, as Helba Huara proved to the world. But the point is that, by the mere act of dancing, the elements which compose it are transformed; the dance is an end in itself, just like life. The acceptance of the situation, any situation, brings about a flow, a rhythmic impulse towards self-expression. To relax is, of course, the first thing a dancer has to learn. It is also the first thing a patient has to learn when he confronts the analyst. It is the first thing any one has to learn in order to live. It is extremely difficult, because it means surrender, full surrender. Howe's whole point of view is based on this simple, yet revolutionary idea of full and unequivocal surrender. It is the religious view of life: the positive acceptance of pain, suffering, defeat, misfortune, and so on. It is the long way round, which has always proved to be the shortest way after all. It means the assimilation of experience, fulfillment through obedience and discipline: the curved span of time through natural growth rather than the speedy, disastrous short-cut. This is the path of wisdom, and the one that must be taken eventually, because all the others only lead to it.

Few books dealing with wisdom—or shall I say, *the art of living*?—are so studded with profundities as these three books. The professional thinker is apt to look at them askance because of the utter simplicity of the author's statements. Unlike the analyst, the professional thinker seldom enjoys the opportunity of seeing his theories put to the test. With the analyst thinking is always vital, as well as an every-day affair. He is being put to the test every moment of his life. In the present case we are dealing with a man for whom writing is a stolen luxury, a fact which could be highly instructive to many writers who spend hours trying to squeeze out a thought.

Howe looks at the world as it is now, this moment. He sees it very much as he would a patient coming to him for treatment. “The truth is, we are sick,” he says, and not only that, but—“we are sick of being sick.” If there is something wrong, he infers, it is not a something which can be driven out with a stick, or a bayonet. The remedy is metaphysically achieved, not therapeutically: the cure does not lie in finding a cause and rooting it out. “It is as if we change the map of life itself by changing our attitude towards it,” says Howe. This is an eternal sort of gymnastics, known to all wise men, which lies at the very root of metaphysics.

Life, as we all know, is conflict, and man, being part of life, is himself an expression of conflict. If he recognizes the fact and accepts it, he is apt, despite the conflict, to know peace and to enjoy it. But to arrive at this end, which is only a beginning (for we haven’t begun to live yet!), man has got to learn the doctrine of acceptance, that is, of unconditional surrender, which is love. And here I must say that I think the author goes beyond any theory of life yet enunciated by the analysts; here he reveals himself as something more than a healer, reveals himself as an artist of life, a man capable of choosing the most perilous course in the certitude of faith. *Faith in life*, let me quickly add—a faith free and flexible, equal to any emergency and broad enough to include death, as well as other so-called evils. For in this broad and balanced view of life death appears neither as “the last enemy” nor the “end”; if the healer has a role, as he points out, it is “to play the part of gynaecologist to death.” (For further delectation the reader might see the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*.)

The whole fourth-dimensional view of reality, which is Howe’s metaphysic, hinges on this understanding of acceptance. The fourth element is Time, which is another way, as Goethe so well knew, of saying—growth. As a seed grows in the natural

course of time, so the world grows, and so it dies, and so it is reborn again. This is the very antithesis of the current notion of "progress," in which are bound up the evil dragons of will, purpose, goal and struggle—or rather, they are not bound up, but unleashed. Progress, according to the Westerner, means a straight line through impenetrable barriers, creating difficulties and obstacles all along the line, and thus defeating itself. Howe's idea is the Oriental one, made familiar to us through the art of jujitsu, wherein the obstacle itself is made into an aid. The method is as applicable to what we call disease, or death or evil, as it is to a bullying adversary. The secret of it lies in the recognition that force can be directed as well as feared—more, that everything can be converted to good or evil, profit or loss, according to one's attitude. In his present fearsome state man seems to have but one attitude, escape, wherein he is fixed as in a nightmare. Not only does he refuse to accept his fears, but worse, he fears his fears. Everything seems infinitely worse than it is, says Howe, "just because we are trying to escape." This is the very Paradise of Neurosis, a glue of fear and anxiety in which, unless we are willing to rescue ourselves, we may stick forever. To imagine that we are going to be saved by outside intervention, whether in the shape of an analyst, a dictator, a savior, or even God, is sheer folly. There are not enough lifeboats to go around, and anyway, as the author points out, what is needed more than lifeboats is lighthouses. A fuller, clearer vision—not more safety appliances!

Many influences, of astounding variety, have contributed to shape this philosophy of life which, unlike most philosophies, takes its stance *in* life, and not in a system of thought. His view embraces conflicting world-views; there is room in it to include all of Whitman, Emerson, Thoreau, as well as Taoism, Zen Buddhism, astrology, occultism, and so forth. It is a thoroughly religious view of life, in that it recognizes "the supremacy of the unseen." Emphasis is laid on the dark side of life, on all that

which is considered negative, passive, evil, feminine, mysterious, unknowable. War Dance closes on this note—"there is nothing that it is not better to accept, even though it be the expression of our enemy's ill-will. There is no progress other than what is, if we could let it be. . . ." This idea of let be, of non -interference, of living now in the moment, fully, with complete faith in the processes of life, which must remain ever largely unknown to us, is the cardinal aspect of his philosophy. It means evolution versus revolution, and involution as well as evolution. It takes cognizance of insanity as well as sleep, dream and death. It does not seek to eliminate fear and anxiety, but to incorporate them in the whole plexus of man's emotional being. It does not offer a panacea for our ills, nor a paradise beyond: it recognizes that life's problems are fundamentally insoluble and accepts the fact graciously. It is in this full recognition and acceptance of conflict and paradox that Howe reconciles wisdom with common sense. At the heart of it is humor, gaiety, the sense of play—not morality, but reality. It is a lenitive, purgative, healing doctrine, based on the open palm rather than the closed fist; on surrender, sacrifice, renunciation, rather than struggle, conquest, idealism. It favors the slow, rhythmic movement of growth rather than the direct method which would attain an imaginary end through speed and force. (Is not the end always bound up with the means?) It seeks to eliminate the doctor as well as the patient, by accepting the disease itself rather than the medicine or the mediator; it puts the seed above the bomb, conversion before solution, and counsels uniqueness rather than normality.

It seems to be generally admitted by intelligent people, and even by the unintelligent, that we are passing through one of the darkest moments in history. (What is not so clearly recognized, however, is that man has passed through many such periods before, and survived!) There are those who content themselves with putting the blame for our condition on the "enemy," call it church, education, government,

Fascism, Communism, poverty, circumstance, or what not. ‘They waste their forces proving that they are “right” and the other follow “wrong.” For them society is largely composed of those who are against their ideas. But society is composed of the insane and the criminals, as well as the righteous and the unrighteous. Society represents all of us, “what we are and how we feel about life,” as Howe puts it. Society is sick, scarcely anybody will deny that, and in the midst of this sick world are the doctors who, “knowing little of the reason why they prescribe for us, have little faith in anything but heroic surgery and in the patient’s quite unreasonable ability to recover.” The medical men are not interested in health, but in combating sickness and disease. Like the other members of society, they function negatively. Similarly, no statesmen arise who appear capable of dealing with the blundering dictators, for the quite probable reason that they are themselves dictators at heart. . .

Here is the picture of our so-called “normal” world, obeying, as Howe calls it, the law of “infinite regress”:

> “Science carefully measures the seen, but it despises the unseen. Religion subdivides itself, protesting and nonconforming in one negative schism after another, pursuing the path of infinite regress while aggressively attaching itself to the altars of efficient organization. Art exploits a multiplication of accurate imitations; its greatest novelty is ‘Surrealism,’ which prides itself upon its ability to escape all the limitations imposed upon sanity by reality. Education is more or less free for all, but the originality of individualism suffers mechanization by mass productive methods, and top marks are awarded for aggressive excellence. The limits of law aggressively insist that the aggressive should be aggressively eliminated, thus establishing the right by means of out -wronging the wrong-doer. Our amusements are catered for

> by mechanized methods, for we cannot amuse ourselves. Those who cannot play football themselves enthusiastically shout and boo the gallant but well-paid efforts of others in ardent partisanship. Those who can neither run nor take a risk, back horses. Those who cannot take the trouble to tolerate silence have sound brought to their ears without effort, or go to picture palaces to enjoy the vicarious advantages of a synthetic cinema version of the culture of our age. This system we call normality, and it is to live in this disordered world that we bring up our children so expensively. The system is threatened with disaster, but we have no thought but to hold it up, while we clamour for peace in which to enjoy it. Because we live in it, it seems to be as sacred as ourselves. This way of living as refugees from realism, this vaunted palace of progress and culture, it must never suffer change. It is normal to be so! Who said so? And what does this word normal mean?"

"Normality," says Howe, "is the paradise of escapeologists, for it is a fixation concept, pure and simple." "It is better, if we can," he asserts, "to stand alone and to feel quite normal about our abnormality, doing nothing whatever about it, except what needs to be done in order to be oneself."

It is just this ability to stand alone, and not feel guilty or harassed about it, of which the average person is incapable. The desire for a lasting external security is uppermost, revealing itself in the endless pursuit of health, happiness, possessions and so on, defense of what has been acquired being the obsessive idea, and yet no real defense being possible, because one cannot defend what is undefendable. All that can be defended are imaginary, illusory, protective devices. Who, for example, could feel sorry for St. Francis because he threw away his clothes and took the vow of poverty? He was the first man on record, I imagine, who asked for stones instead

of bread. Living on the refuse which others threw away he acquired the strength to accomplish miracles, to inspire a joy such as few men have given the world, and, by no means the least of his powers, to write the most sublime and simple, the most eloquent hymn of thanksgiving that we have in all literature: *The Canticle to the Sun*. Let go and let be! Howe urges. Being is burning, in the truest sense, and if there is to be any peace it will come about through being, not having.

We are all familiar with the phrase—"life begins at forty." For the majority of men it is so, for it is only in middle age that the continuity of life, which death promises, begins to make itself felt and understood. The significance of renunciation, as the author explains it, lies in the fact that it is not a mere passive acquiescence, an ignominious surrender to the inevitable forces of death, but, on the contrary, a re-counting, a re-valuing. It is at this crucial point in the individual's life that the masculine element gives way to the feminine. This is the usual course, which Nature herself seems to take care of. For the awakened individual, however, life begins now, at any and every moment; it begins at the moment when he realizes that he is part of a great whole, and in the realization becomes himself whole. In the knowledge of limits and relationships he discovers the eternal self, thenceforth to move with obedience and discipline in full freedom. *Balance, discipline, illumination*—these are the key words in Howe's doctrine of wholeness, or holiness, for the words mean the same thing. It is not essentially new, but it needs to be rediscovered by each and every one individually. As I said before, one meets it in such poets and thinkers as Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, to take a few recent examples. It is a philosophy of life which nourished the Chinese for thousands of years, a philosophy which, unfortunately, they have abandoned under Western influence.

That this ancient wisdom of life should be reaffirmed by a practicing analyst, by a "healer," seems to me altogether logical and just. What greater temptation is there for the healer than to play the role of God—and who knows better than he the nature and the wisdom of God? E. Graham Howe is a man in his prime, healthy, normal in the abnormal sense, successful, as the word goes, and desirous more than anything else of leading his own life. He knows that the healer is primarily an artist, and not a magician or a god. He seeks, by expressing his views publicly, to wean the public of a dependency which is itself an expression of disease. He is not interested in healing, but in being. He does not seek to cure, but to enjoy a life more abundant. He is not struggling to eliminate disease, but to accept it, and by devouring it, incorporate it in the body of light and health which is man's true heritage. He is not overburdened, because his philosophy of health would not permit him to assume tasks beyond his powers. He takes everything in his stride, with measure and balance, consuming only what he can digest and assimilate of experience. If he is a very capable analyst, as is generally admitted, even by his detractors, it is not because of what he knows, but because of what he is. He is constantly unloading himself of excess baggage, be it in the form of patients, friends, admirers or possessions. His mind is, as the Chinese well say, "alive-and -empty." He is anchored in the flux, neither drowned in it nor vainly trying to dam it. He is a very wise man who is at peace with himself and the world. One knows that instantly, merely by shaking hands with him.

"There is no need," he says, in concluding *War Dance*, "to be morbid about the difficulty in which we find ourselves, for there is no undue difficulty about it, if we will but realise that we bring the difficulty upon ourselves by trying to alter the inevitable. The Little Man is so afraid of being overwhelmed, but the Larger Man hopes for it; the Little Man refuses to swallow so much of his experience, regarding

it as evil, but the Larger Man takes it as his everyday diet, keeping open pipe and open house for every enemy to pass through; the Little Man is terrified lest he should dip from light into darkness, from seen into unseen, but the Larger Man realises that it is but sleep or death and either is the very practice of his recreation; the Little Man depends upon 'goods' or golf for his well-being, seeking for doctors or other saviours, but the Larger Man knows by the deeper process of his inward conviction that truth is paradox and that he is safest when he is least defended. . . . The war of life is one thing; man's war is another, being war about war, war against war, in infinite regress of offensive and defensive argument."

It may seem, from the citations, that I favor *War Dance* above the other two books, but such is not the case. Perhaps because of the daily threat of war I was led instinctively to make reference to this book, which is really about Peace. The three books are equally valuable and represent different facets of this same homely philosophy, which is not, let me repeat, a system of thought expounded and defended in brilliant fashion, but a wisdom of life that increments life. It has no other purpose than to make life more life-like, strange as this may sound.

Whoever has dipped into the esoteric lore of the East must recognize that the attitude towards life set forth in these books is but a rediscovery of the Doctrine of the Heart. The element of Time, so fundamental in Howe's philosophy, is a restatement, in scientific language, of the esoteric view that one cannot travel on the Path before one has become that Path himself. Never, perhaps, in historic times, has man been further off the Path than at this moment. An age of darkness, it has been called— a transitional period, involving disaster and enlightenment. Howe is not alone in thus summarizing our epoch: it is the opinion of earnest men everywhere. It might be regarded as an equinoctial solstice of the soul, the furthest outward reach that can be

made without complete disintegration. It is the moment when the earth, to use another analogy, before making the swing back, seems to stand stock still. There is an illusion of "end," a stasis seemingly like death. But it is only an illusion. Everything, at this crucial point, lies in the attitude which we assume towards the moment. If we accept it as a death we may be re- born and continue on our cyclical journey. If we regard it as an "end" we are doomed. It is no accident that the various death philosophies with which we are familiar should arise at this time. We are at the parting of the ways, able to look forwards and backwards with infinite hope or despair. Nor is it strange either that so many varied expressions of a fourth-dimensional view of life should now make their appearance. The negative view of life, which is really the death- like view of things, summed up by Howe in the phrase "infinite regress," is gradually giving way to a positive view, which is multi-dimensional. (Whenever the fourth- dimensional view is grasped multiple dimensions open up. The fourth is the symbolic dimension which opens the horizon in infinite "egress." With it time-space takes on a wholly new character: every aspect of life is henceforth transmuted.)

In dying the seed re-experiences the miracle of life, but in a fashion far beyond the comprehension of the individual organism. The tenor of death is more than compensated for by the unknown joys of birth. It is precisely the difference, in my opinion, between the Eye and the Heart doctrines. For, as we all know, in expanding the field of knowledge we but increase the horizon of ignorance. "Life is not in the form, but in the flame," says Howe. For two thousand years, despite the real wisdom of Christ's teachings, we have been trying to live in the mold, trying to wrest wisdom from knowledge, instead of wooing it, trying to conquer over Nature instead of accepting and living by her laws. It is not at all strange, therefore, that the analyst, into whose hands the sick and weary are now giving themselves like sheep to the

slaughter, finds it necessary to reinstate the metaphysical view of life. (Since Thomas Aquinas there has been no metaphysics.) The cure lies with the patient, not with the analyst. We are chained to one another by invisible links, and it is the weakest in whom our strength is revealed, or registered. "Poetry must be made by all," said Lautréamont, and so too must all real progress. We must grow wise together, else all is vain and illusory. If we are in a dilemma, it is better that we stand still and face the issue, rather than resort to hasty and heroic action. "To live in truth, which is suspense," says Howe, " is adventure, growth, uncertainty, risk and danger. Yet there is little opportunity in life today for experiencing that adventure, unless we go to war." Meaning thereby that by evading our real problems from day to day we have produced a schism, on the one side of which is the illusory life of comfortable security and painlessness, and on the other disease, catastrophe, war, and so forth. We are going through Hell now, but it would be excellent if it really were hell, and if we really go through with it. We cannot possibly hope, unless we are thoroughly neurotic, to escape the consequences of our foolish behavior in the past. Those who are trying to put the onus of responsibility for the dangers which threaten on the shoulders of the "dictators" might well examine their own hearts and see whether their allegiance is really "free" or a mere attachment to some other form of authority, possibly unrecognized. "Attachment to any system, whether psychological or otherwise," says Howe, "is suggestive of anxious escape from life." Those who are preaching revolution are also defenders of the *status quo—their status quo*. Any solution for the world's ills must embrace all mankind. We have got to relinquish our precious theories, our buttresses and supports, to say nothing of our defenses and possessions. We have got to become more inclusive, not more exclusive. What is not acknowledged and assimilated through experience, piles up in the form of guilt and creates a real Hell, the literal meaning of which is—where the unburnt must be burnt! The doctrine of reincarnation includes this vital truth; we in the West scoff at

the idea, but we are none the less victims of the law. Indeed, if one were to try to give a graphic description of this place-condition, what more accurate illustration could be summoned than the picture of the world we now "have on our hands"? The realism of the West, is it not negated by reality? The word has gone over into its opposite, which is the case with so many of our words. We are trying to live only in the light, with the result that we are enveloped in darkness. We are constantly fighting for the right and the good, but everywhere we see evil and injustice. As Howe rightly says, "if we must have our ideals achieved and gratified, they are not ideals at all, but phantasies." We need to open up, to relax, to give way, to obey the deeper laws of our being, in order to find a true discipline.

Discipline Howe defines as "the art of the acceptance of the negative." It is based on the recognition of the duality of life, of the relative rather than the absolute. Discipline permits a free flow of energy; it gives absolute freedom within relative limits. One develops despite circumstances, not because of them. This was a life wisdom known to Eastern peoples, handed down to us in many guises, not least of which is the significant study of symbols, known as astrology. Here time and growth are vital elements to the understanding of reality. Properly understood, there are no good or bad horoscopes, nor good or bad "aspects"; there is no moral or ethical examination of men or things, only a desire to get at the significance of the forces within and without, and their relationship. An attempt, in short, to arrive at a total grasp of the universe, and thus keep man anchored in the moving stream of life, which embraces known and unknown. Any and every moment, from this viewpoint, is therefore good or right, the best for whoever it be, for on how one orients himself to the moment depends the failure or fruitfulness of it. In a very real sense we can see today how man has really dislocated himself from the movement of life; he is somewhere on the periphery, whirling like a whirligig, going faster and faster and

blinder and blinder. Unless he can make the gesture of surrender, unless he can let go the iron will which is merely an expression of his negation of life, he will never get back to the center and find his true being. It is not only the "dictators" who are possessed, but the whole world of men everywhere; we are in the grip of demonic forces created by our own fear and ignorance. We say No to everything, instinctively. Our very instincts are perverted, so that the word itself has come to lose all sense. The whole man acts not instinctively, but intuitively, because "his wishes are as much at one with the law as he is himself." But to act intuitively one must obey the deeper law of love, which is based on absolute tolerance, the law which suffers or permits things to be as they are. Real love is never perplexed, never qualifies, never rejects, never demands. It replenishes, by grace of restoring unlimited circulation. It burns, because it knows the true meaning of sacrifice. It is life illumined.

The idea of "unlimited circulation," not only of the necessities of life, but of everything, is, if there be such a thing, the magic behind Howe's philosophy. It is the most practical way of life, though seemingly impractical. Whether it be admitted or not, there are hierarchies of being, as well as of role. The highest types of men have always been those in favor of "unlimited circulation." They were comparatively fearless and sought neither riches nor security, except in themselves. By abandoning all that they most cherished they found the way to a larger life. Their example still inspires us, though we follow them more with the eye than with the heart, if we follow at all. They never attempted to lead, but only to guide. The real leader has no need to lead—he is content to point the way. Unless we become our own leaders, content to be what we are in process of becoming, we shall always be servitors and idolaters. We have only what we merit; we would have infinitely more if we wanted less. The whole secret of salvation hinges on the conversion of word to deed, with

and through the whole being. It is this turning in wholeness and faith, conversion, in the spiritual sense, which is the mystical dynamic of the fourth- dimensional view. I used the word salvation a moment ago, but salvation, like fear or death, when it is accepted and experienced, is no longer "salvation." There is no salvation, really, only infinite realms of experience providing more and more tests, demanding more and more faith. Willy-nilly we are moving towards the Unknown, and the sooner and readier we give ourselves up to the experience, the better it will be for us. This very word which is so frequently on our lips today—*transition*—indicates increasing awareness, as well as apprehension. To become more aware is to sleep more soundly, to cease twitching and tossing. It is only when we get beyond phantasy, beyond wishing and dreaming, that the real conversion takes place and we awake re-born, the dream re-becomes reality. For reality is the goal, deny it how we will. And we can approach it only by an ever-expanding consciousness, by burning more and more brightly, until even memory itself vanishes.

Oh My: Part One … by Charlotte

I have to admit I was angry at my mother. On the eve of my seventeenth birthday she told me to pack a travel bag and off we went across country, from New York City to Stanford in California. It was the start of the summer and I thought we were just taking a short holiday together. When we were cruising at 30,000 feet on our way from New York to Chicago she broke the news that she was separating from my father. She had caught him having an affair with one of his grad students …

When my mother broke the news I could not stop crying. Things had been tense at home over the past several months. I knew something was going on but neither my father nor mother would tell me what. It seems his grad student girlfriend had gotten pregnant … (my mother used another word … but oars are for boats aren't they?). That sounded familiar. That's how my parents met and also how I came along.

My mother was my father's second wife. He was a married man when she was his graduate student and had gotten pregnant. He had wanted my mother to have an abortion but she refused … *Thank God* … otherwise I would not be here to tell my story. Now it looked like he would have a third wife, and another baby. I had an older half-sister from his first marriage. Now we would both have a new sibling.

As I looked out the window I wondered about what would come next? When we got to Chicago I wanted to turn back home but my mother said that we would be moving to a new university in California. Both my parents are university professors. I now understood why my mother asked me for my cellphone when we got on the plane. I pleaded for it but all she said was "I promise I will give it back to you when we get

to Stanford." When we got on the plane she didn't even tell me we were off to California. I thought we were getting off in Chicago.

If I had my cellphone I would have called my boyfriend then and there and he would have flown to Chicago to get me and bring me back to his place in New York. At least I would have been in a familiar city.

I was twice as angry with my mother because my boyfriend and I had made plans for us to go upstate to his family's cottage and spend the summer together there. And quite frankly I wanted to share a bed with him, something my mother forbade me to do. "What if you got pregnant?" Sure, fancy that she would say that, I was sixteen and she was thirty-five. I heard that the first time she had sex was with her prof (my father) as a way of trying to convince him to give her a higher final grade!

It is kind'a crazy because she knew that I knew the whole story … but I was not allowed to say anything! My mother had been over protective of me. My parents sent me to an all-girl Catholic school. I knew for a fact that I was the only girl in my grade who was still a virgin. I had not even touched a boy or let a boy touch me. I had never even seen a naked boy nor let see me naked. The fact that my boyfriend was back in New York and I was going to live in California made matters twice as bad. He was Catholic and good boy. That was just too much pressure on me.

By the time we had left Chicago I had made my decision … this summer I was going to be feral. I would lose my virginity as a way of getting back at my mother. In retrospect this was a stupid decision which thankfully played … but not fully. By the end of the summer I would know a bit more about boys … yet still wore my halo.

At Stanford my mother was going to be interviewed for three jobs, one of which she would be asked to take. The three interviews were more to let her decide which position she wanted. The university had already made her a job offer. For the week they had arranged to put us up at the guesthouse at the Stanford Linear Accelerator.

When we arrived at the SLAC guesthouse, as we were checking in my mother said she would be going out to dinner tonight with your prof friends and asked if I wanted to come. I said an emphatic no. I then asked my mother for my cellphone. When she gave it back to me the battery had been entirely drained and we didn't have a charger. Neither did the guest house!

"What am I going to all night?" I asked her.

"You can watch television," she answered.

The manager frowned. "There is no television in our rooms Ma'am."

Now I was hooped!

Out of the corner of my eye I saw a man sitting reading a newspaper and he looked at me and seemed to understand my plight. Not just my little one, mind you, but the bigger plight. He reached into his jacket pocket and dangled a cellphone charger. He put his finger to his lips and mocked … shh! Then he folded the newspaper, placed the charger within the fold, got up and walked over to stand next to me.

"Here miss, you can borrow my weekend New York Times. When you are finished with it just place it outside room 12." Then he walked away. My angst seemed to

dissolve in half. I was still miffed I was in California, but now at least I will be able to text my boyfriend. I also sensed I had a new friend. We were given room 14.

My mother turned to me and said "there dear, now you have something to do this evening. Are you hungry?"

We had travelled the day. I don't eat much when we traveled, my mother knew this and so she knew I would be hungry. The guesthouse manager said there are some menus for local restaurants who would deliver but "your daughter would have to go down to the gate to get her food when it arrived."

My mother charged a pizza on our room account. Lucky for me there was a vending machine with cold drinks. My pizza arrived just as my mother was ready to go out for the evening and so we both walked to the gate, she to hop into her cab and me to grab my pizza. I had asked for a medium but my mother had ordered a large, and well that was just too much for me to eat all by myself. As I walked back past room 12 I had an instance of hesitation before I knocked on his door.

When he opened the door he smiled and flippantly said "I didn't order a pizza!"

"Will you share it with me?" I asked him in a voice that was almost pleading.

"Sure come in … " He looked up and down the aisle before asking " will your mother be joining us?"

"No she has gone out for dinner with some of her friends." He ushered me into his room and I set the pizza down at the center of a small round table. He pulled out a

chair for me and asked "would you like me to get you something to drink?" I smiled and produced two cans of Mountain Dew, one from each of the pockets of my jacket.

"My favorite," he said. "What's the special occasion?"

"My seventeenth birthday …"

"Congratulations." He suddenly kissed me on both cheeks the way the French do. This made me blush. There was something about him that spoke of kindness and gentleness.

Our conversation started with the stand-by "where are you from?" By the time we were half finished the pizza we were like old friends that had known each other forever. This was the moment I decided to open up to him about my angst.

By the time he said "you should wait until you are married to have intercourse," my heart sank. Maybe it was silly of me to expect to jump into bed with him?

After a pause he continued "… but it is possible for woman to enjoy herself without having intercourse …"

I looked up at him and mockingly appeared perplexed. I wanted to see where this conversation would go.

"Do you know what intercourse means?"

Although I did know I still shook my head.

“Intercourse is when a woman lets a man put his penis inside of her vagina …”

I blushed warmly when he said penis and twice as much when he said vagina.

“You are a virgin aren’t you?” he asked quietly.

I lowered my eyes and nodded slowly.

“Being a virgin is not something to be embarrassed about. This is something you should be proud about! You want to protect your reproductive health. Did you know that every second adult in the United States has or have had a sexually transmitted disease?”

When he said that I looked up at him surprised.

He continued. “I bet half the girls in your class back in New York have or have had the clap. “

“The clap … What’s that?”

“The clap … is slang for gonorrhea. It can be transmitted through oral, genital, or anal sex with someone who has the infection. It can also be spread from mother to child during birth. This bacterial infection is on the rise in the US and is becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotics. It is pretty nasty and can harm your uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries. It is good you are still a virgin …”

You would think this revelation would cool my angst off but strangely this made me even more hot and bothered.

We had all but finished our pizza but not our conversation.

“Did you read the article in the times about the HIV hot spot out in the Bronx?”

I shook my head.

He said “you should read it. A high school in the Bronx has at least twelve students in grades eleven and twelve who have all contracted HIV from one fella’ who bedded some girls without wearing a condom. They went to bed with other boys and well four months in there are at least nine girls and three boys who have HIV and I suspect a good half dozen more will come down with HIV before this tragedy plays out.”

I shook my head solemnly. “So what are some of the other ways that a woman to enjoy herself without having intercourse?”

“Stand up.”

I complied. He started by pulling my blouse over my head.

“Now you take a piece of clothing off me.”

I took off his shirt.

He undid my pants and I let then drop to the floor.

I undid his belt and his pants dropped too, hesitated by a second by his erection.

Then he stepped close to me and wrapped his arms around me to undo my bra. When my bra popped off my breasts my nipples were erect and sensitive.

I hesitated for a second as he took off his socks and I followed by taking off mine as well.

For a few seconds we stood in front of each other with our modesty hidden away behind thin pieces of fabric. It was a moment that he gave me to ask myself … do I want to continue in this game?

After a good thirty seconds he continued.

"You first" he said and I bet forward and slowly drew down his boxers. His penis sprung out from under the band and wobbled back and forth. It was an amazing sight I had never before seen. I just stared and started to giggle with a mixture of nervousness and happiness.

Then he stepped forward and slowly drew down my panties over my hips and down my bare legs. I stepped out of my panties. The sensation I felt was marvelous. I felt a cool tingling all across all my body. I was wet between my legs and I could feel the blush across my face and chest.

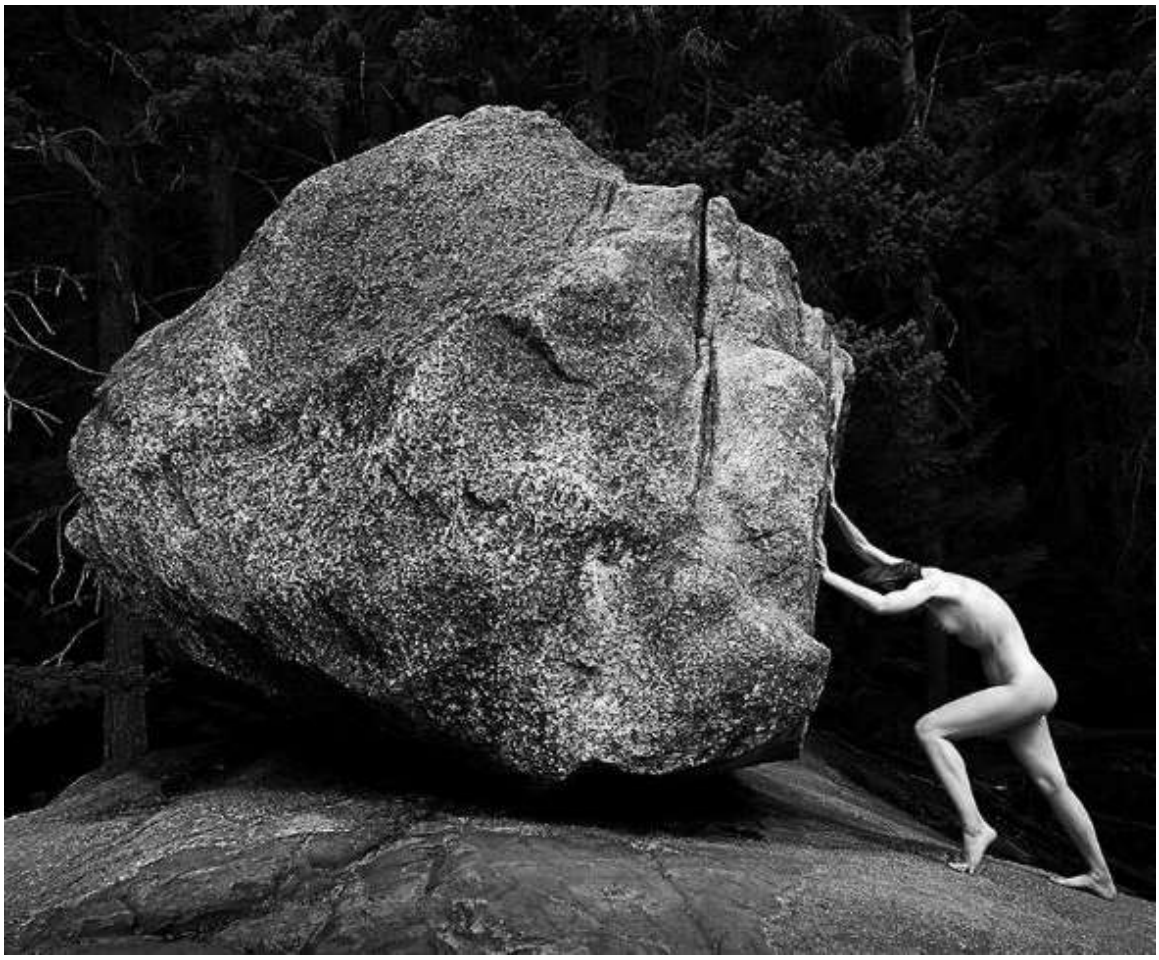
"What next? I whispered.

“Let us take a shower together …” he whispered back.

As we were about to step in the shower, I asked him to take a picture of me with my cellphone. It was wonderful being admired in this way.

He was kind and gentle with me, and no we did not have sex. What happened in the shower I may share with you another time, but it was wonderful!

Pictorial: The Human Struggle



The Game of the Sexes … by Anon

Some view the game of the sexes as a *sporting event*, but not me. Even when I was a *wee* little boy I knew that the game of life was not a gladiator sport.

At age fifteen I sorted out how girls and boys are different. There are twelve fundamental differences between a boy and a girl.

Not all of these difference relate to sex.

The *Gold* banner of the difference is in the kindness you see in girls. Boys tend not to be kind by nature, but girls are. This is about hormones.

The form and function of each sex also reflect their purpose in life. Girls are meant to perpetuate the species while boys are meant to toil and provide for offspring. Boys are taller, have longer limbs and greater mechanical advantage. We are meant to lift and carry, cut and drag, and of course combat. It's in our testosterone. Girls are meant to nurture – this is in their estrogen.

The brains of girls and boys evolved differently, with both hemispheres more robustly linked in girls compared to boys. For boys it is either thought in one hemisphere or the other. With girls both hemispheres light up in PET Tomographs.

Boys weigh more and have hair all over their bodies. Girls have hair only where needed. She is soft all over.

Why do boys have breasts? We know why girls do. I will leave you to figure this one out (the clue is human embryos are indistinct for the first seven weeks of gestation – something about pluripotentiality).

Boys hearts don't beat as efficiency as girl's hearts. Boys lungs and immune system are less robust (we saw that during Covid-19). The GI system in a girl is more efficient as well. Are you keeping count?

Boys and girls have the same number of bones, but the hips of a girl are quite different from a boy's given the needs of birthing children – more space between the legs. Evolution has provided for this.

Then there are the sexual differences which relate to a girl's *source de vie* (where babies come from) and the '*best of a boy'*, which hangs outside his body.

You have to admit that she is beautifully designed while a boy is a cartoon character. She has soft external folds and a clitoris. He is just a wiener.

She has her uterus and other fine things. Have you ever noticed that a boy's scrotum is where a girl's birth canal is? And while girls have ovaries, boys have testicles ensconced within a pocket of muscle and skin that looks suspiciously like a uterus turned inside out.

The first time I saw what a girl looked like I started to *shake* with the nervousness of realizing that God existed – for only God could create such beauty.

In the game of the sexes, *globally*, girls have all the advantages when it comes to human form and function, don't you think? That's why they live longer.

His confidence in reason shaken, appalled by the contemporary tyrant's transgression of all accepted rules, the intellectual of today shows in his search for a new morality a marked preference for the Archetype — for one who wishes to save humanity by his model conduct, the development of which is set in advance. If man learnt not to cheat, then, like a knight in a game of chess he could be counted upon to act according to rules set down for the knight and not those for the bishop or the pawn. When translated into social reality these "castes" of knights and bishops become artists and saints. The archetype is the one who wins the game by achieying successfully his "mission." Thus, thanks to the representative of a "caste" the "community," the Blacks or the Whites are victorious. But in a game wherein human beings replace inanimate pawns moved by the player, it is necessary for "bishops" and "castles" to cooperate with the "knight"; this can only be done by transcending their reality — the rules they are confined to — through intuition, which is what the mystic would call grace and the psychoanalyst sublimation. If one refuses to accept either the theory based on the hypothesis of a supernatural player or the predetermined role of castes, there is still the lead of Prometheus.

It is then necessary to the mystifications of a history of patterns (the histories of Spengler and Toynbee) and to a psychology of types and of false individualism (Jung) to oppose the dynamic view of historical materialism and Freudian psychology.

The emphasis should be placed on historic tasks and not on archetype heroes; to the caste hero we oppose the individual hero; to intuitions (the grace bestowed or the power of sublimation), fidelity to the materialist's idea. Since Prometheus has

cheated the gods man has ceased to play and invents new tricks: thus Galileo moves the world which Archimedes claimed could be moved; Brancusi gives wings to stones first brought to life by Pygmalion. All are heroes for they have created, but who can say without chaining the mind that the one to be followed always is the martyr rather than the statesman, the artist rather than the warrior? Since our society has substituted the cult of the unknown soldier for the hero, liberty can only serve all who want to establish a regime of tyranny; despotism is the sour fruit of Democracy and none saw this more clearly than Plato and Demosthenes. Whosoever is against tyranny and won't accept its conquests must oppose to the Hitlers and Stalins great men in place of conquerors.

The anxiety that is the consequence of the feeling of guilt, and that has its cause in the fear of revealing a secret, can only be overcome by following a discipline of purification. The method employed varies according to the degree of civilization of the body social. From the terrific anxiety repressed in primitive society by a system of taboos man gradually succeeded in overcoming certain fears by developing the less rigid notion of sin. The individualization of sin as contrasted to its tribal fixation, so obvious in Judaism, is an achievement of the Greeks; only in a civilization where gods had been humanized as they were in the Iliad could the cause of sin come to be attributed to human instead of supernatural forces.

After the great reformers, Minos, Homer, Zarathustra and Saint Paul, Christian confession added a definitely individual and dynamic element to this process of purification, but only in our day, due to psycho-analysis and the theory of sublimation, can we speak of the complete secularization of purification and therefore foresee the time when society will rationalize dynamic rules of conduct. Man can only hope to overcome the atavistic sense of guilt by aiming at new goals.

The last great heroes of the western world, Taylor and Ford, belong to a new type, the engineers. After the depression and the loss of confidence in progress the two extremes, amoralism and mysticism, invaded all fields of activity. It is unnecessary now to refute the amoralist attitude as events, this war in particular, have made it obvious that indifference toward institutions is no more compatible with intellectual life. But it is the incompatibility between the rationalist's and the mystic's attitude toward guilt and sin that makes it impossible for all who still defend Hegel's great aphorism, "all that is real is rational and all that is rational is real", to accept a mystic solution to the problem of values.

But neither do the mystics agree among themselves upon the nature of purity. According to Aldous Huxley "a man who has learnt to love God intensely and unremittingly can safely do what he wishes, because he will never wish to do evil." This deification of man has always been considered heretical by the Christian churches and it is certainly contrary to the dogma of grace. Caught between the contradiction evil-purity it is not good deeds that the saint can oppose to temptation but only God's charity. The case against the purely contemplative type of mysticism Huxley now advocates with such zeal is forcefully exposed by Saint Augustine: "If . . . invulnerability means a state in which there is no fear to tempt us and torment us this invulnerability is to be shunned in this life if we are to live it.' But why reopen the case of oriental philosophy? None of its supporters have yet been able to refute successfully Hegel's indictment of it. As long as we cannot see in Indian philosophy anything more "than the soul drawing itself within itself, raising itself up into liberty or thought which constitutes itself for itself'? this is "'just as empty vanity where the subjective power of negation alone remains, everything disappears, this abstraction of intellectual substantiality only signifies an escape into what is empty and without determination, wherein everything vanishes. . . The Idea has not become objective

in Indian philosophy." The French Yogists who now contemplate in Marseilles the navel of their shrinking bellies have not succeeded in refuting Bergson's crushing indictment of the Indian conception of morals. Industrialism, he says, by freeing western society and consequently the Christian mystic also from the oriental idea of inevitability, provides a new impetus to love and to the mystic's love of God. It was Renan who said, as Toynbee reminds us, that detachment is not compatible with love.

But because everything that was important in Christian philosophy has been secularized by the western mind, it is necessary for rationalists to take in account the Christian heritage. From very early times man's consciousness has been partly determined by theology — an attempt to conciliate the contradiction individual-society by substituting for society a mythical image of the universe that would satisfy our "'oceanic feeling." This feeling could never have been made to serve concrete reality and therefore our civilization could never have attained the high level it came to in the western world if progress and liberty had not become the two great driving forces of our society. It is only a religion of a progressive character that could elaborate in its policy of proselytism a dialectic explanation of man and his creator, cause and effect. In the development of the contradiction science religion, as we follow it from the time of Giordano Bruno, we must come to Hegel before we are able to apply dialectics to history. I see no reason, contrarily to Toynbee, to oppose to the imperfections of human laws and to PJjato's idea of the polity, Saint Augustine's theocracy. But if historical materialism makes us turn away with impatience from Toynbee's political archaism, it is not to favor an ideological empiricism by means of which we could incorporate in our modern world this or that commandment of Confucius or Lao Tse. To Professor Hocking's defense of the value of Chinese ethics I oppose again the judgment of Hegel: "Cicero gives us in

De Officiis, a book of moral teachings more comprehensive and better than all the books of Confucius .. . for the Chinese (according to Lao Tse) what is highest and the origin of things is nothing, emptiness, the altogether undetermined, the abstract universal and this is also called Tao or reason. . . But if philosophy has got no further than to such expression, it still stands in its most elementary stage. . . What is there to be found in all this learning?" Nothing, and that is why we can study oriental philosophy only from the point of view of anthropology.

Today, America in her pragmatism is behaving toward philosophy as Rome did toward non-Roman deities such as Apis or Isis. But it is not because priests have become professors and that universities replace shrines, pragmatism polytheism, that monists, christians or materialists, should submit to this intellectual farce of petting Civa and Buddha on the shoulder. And if we are against the saint it is certainly not in favor of pseudo-saints, Gandhi or Chiang Kai-shek — for the latter, too, according to Professor Hocking, is a great politico-religious reformer. But if this is the case, why not extend our sympathy to Pétain, whom his admirers call a second Jeanne d'Arc?

If loss of confidence in reason encouraged some in religious thinking, it influenced others to set up art into a cult, an idea whose origin can be traced back to the "religion" of Saint Simon and Enfantin, and whose intellectual justification is to be found more directly in the theories of Spencer and Durkheim. Division of labor, this "cancer of society" found its raison d'étre in a time when the bourgeoisie was only too willing to believe in a gradual and unhampered progress. Protestantism — and progress was particularly obvious in Protestant countries, England and Germany — had taught man to have absolute faith in work. Capitalism had made the ruling class feel the need to develop such an ideology because it had separated work from the

instruments of labor. In a period of extreme division of labor, marked by a separation between labor and speculative thought, art becomes for the artist what money was for the workman, a means of purification, and a supreme goal. Since the coming of age of the masses aa the Industrial and French Revolution — and the increase of their educational requirements, the status of the artist and poet has changed from that of courtier to the aristrocratic republics of Athens or Florence to one of demagogue or flatterer of the masses. The purpose of the theory of art for art's sake was to preserve art from the new peril. At this historical conjunction art had for the first time to function in a society which was not dominated by an aristocracy but by a class — the bourgeoisie — which believed more in progress than in tradition, an idea which is expressed in the admiration for the self-made man. The theory of division of labor led art to put an emphasis on experimentation, following the example of science that had come to be identified with progress. As for success, the artist was to obtain it under the form of idolisation which the mass dissemination of knowledge through the press and the radio had made possible. Even the contradiction between sacred and profane, which anthropologists were discovering as a fundamental division in primitive society, seemed to justify the bourgeois point of view; it was so easy to identify in contemporary society science and art with a sacred function! But when, under the pressure of class antagonisms, the mystification of the division of labor ceased to have an effect, then the artists who had already habituated themselves to consider their functions as sacred display all the weakness of caste: their sole preoccupation is to save their skins. Art for art's sake becomes art for the artist's sake; the means become an end and the personal is dehumanized; to save artists now means to save the tools that write books or paint pictures. Vanguard reviews of art and poetry compete in their common effort to justify the artist's escapism. At least André Breton is aware that if the artist should avoid a spiritual collapse it is not enough to suggest that he should cease writing for

the duration or avoid compromises, he appeals to the "'vanguard" to uphold the prerogative of an eternal minority whose task should be to challenge all beliefs in the name of doubt. This fetishism of doubt can only provide a basis for the substitution of ideological competition by personal rivalry. After the last war the de facto substitution of art for art's sake had, from the point of view of the development of civilization, a profound raison d'étre; in the interbellum period the balance between the contradictory social forces was of such a nature that intermediary — petty bourgeois — activity could express itself freely. If we keep in mind that-viewed from the angle of group psychology the function of art is to play the role of a safety valve for emotions, which if not canalised only cause an increase of anxiety, we understand why society became so art conscious in the twenties and thirties and also why art cannot function properly today. When anxiety —the suspense in a period of tension — is replaced by terror in the face of a calamity — there is no social usage for safety valves. Now it is not only useless but it becomes reactionary to rationalize anxiety and turn it into doubt as does Breton —to say nothing of his suggestion to create a new myth. To spread the gospel of doubt in days of agony is like shipping spices to the starving populations of Europe. Doubt may have been progressive in the days when Abelard revolted against the Schoolmasters. But it is only by distorting the political reality of our time that we could speak of the fundamental moral crisis in terms of the contradiction orthodoxy-heresy or temptation-purity. In our effort to overcome anxiety we must try simultaneously to change both the subjective and objective factor of the body social; both the political reality of the world and our attitude toward this reality. To return to the faith of defunct societies and their dogmatism as. the mystics suggest; to the creation of the myths which we are convoked to assist by the hierophants of new mysteries; to the Civitatis Dei of Saint Augustine and to Breton's dialogues written in the backyard

of the Republic and to his banquets without dialogues; to fetishes, it is time to oppose new battle cries.

But how are we to know what are the right battle cries unless we have decided what choice to make and what decisions to reach on the major issues at stake? There is something faulty in a diagnosis that does not indicate the nature of the therapy. However penetrating Arthur Koestler's The Yogi and the Commissar' I doubt that he will be able to give us a satisfactory solution to the problem of conduct. I believe that an analysis based on an "either-or" psychology leads us nowhere. By reducing Jung's archetypes to Kantian antinomies Koestler's pair of opposites in the social spec: trum — the Yogi crouching in the "warmthless but all penetrating" ultra-violet rays and at the other end, obviously the infra-red, the Commissar, the man who "helieves in Change from Without" — are reducible to a common denominator the way the alternate rhythm of day and night are reducible to differences in degree of light. The spectrum no more than the navel can serve; by gazing at either we are fixed to an arbitrary center. Not the navel or its substitutes but the individual is the common denominator in all rhythms of conduct. How misleading Koestler's premises are becomes evident when he accuses Prometheus in the nineteenth century of turning into a shallow optimist full of arrogant self-assurance. If ever Prometheus becomes too enfeebled to pursue his heroic deeds we shall steal the fire from him! It is not by an analysis of the spectrum that we shall discover Prometheus — he is revealed in eruptions of volcanic force.

No final judgment can be passed on actions whose justification lies in their goal, because, we can never know what will be the effects of objective hazard. On the other hand we know since Freud that for all practical purposes we must give up hope of discovering what are in the last instance the motives of our actions, we cannot

judge human conduct according to a theory of intentions. Toynbee's interpretation of how Gregory the Great and the Emperor Heraclius became important heroes in spite of themselves can lead, if correctly applied, to the formulation of a post-Euclidian conception of morality, which will be a morality of relations — of relations to the economic factor. According to this theory of "le heros malgré lui"? no analysis of intentions, no examination of immediate results can guarantee what will be the verdict of history. This theory is a materialist counterpart of Calvin's dogma of predestination and, in a wider sense, both a reply to Protestant and Catholic moralities and to the controversy between Jesuits and Jansenists.

None has more clearly described the nature of the two factors of morality, free will and necessity, than Blaise Pascal. But the principles of a new morality will not be founded on a reinterpretation of a Jansenist theory of intention; they shall be deducted from an application of the theory of probability to the field of morals. It is significant that we owe the basis of the calculus of probability to a study of the game of dice, made by Pascal. Pascal's interest in hazard was predetermined by the growing belief of the capitalists in the advantages of speculation. Less than a century later the Western society went through a series of crises due to oyerconfidence in speculation. The capitalist, a man who has faith in his destiny, is an individualist, intuitively, as Kant would say, he understands that the subjective counterpart to chance or probability, in dice or speculation, is risk, risk and not temptation. The humanist Machiavelli had already drawn our attention to the importance of interest and the Counter Reformation tried to apply the theory of interest to the purposes of the Catholic church; why shouldn't therefore the most powerful individualists of that time apply this theory to their god, money? But in the days of the growth and power of capitalism risk never became a virtue because on the

whole the individual had too much faith in capital and in its stability not to prefer initiative and investment to risk and speculation. After Pascal, risk and chance followed two opposing directions, that of adventures in finance and politics and that of work and science.

From the time accident insurances were given to workers the notion of risk became a counterpart to death and was therefore associated with life. Risk is the latest form of development of purification. The theory of risk has also been applied in some advanced legislations since the last war — and more particularly in social democratic Austria — to unmarried mothers. According to the Austrian legislator and in contradistinction to the French (circa 1910) it was no longer necessary to prove paternity for the man who presumably had had sexual relations with the mother at the time of conception to be responsible for the child because it was assumed that he had taken the risk of conceiving it.

In the development of its own contradictions capitalism had had three important moral implications. First, since Proudhon and Marx the workmen came to realize that salary does not correspond to the value of work, which means that it is not through work that man can become rich. Secondly, economic crises inherent in the capitalist system have seriously shaken the confidence of both the working class and the middle class in such capitalist dictums as “time is money.” Their fear of inflation and unemployment generates an obsession: the idea of earning money without work — outside time so to speak. Thirdly, as opposed to investment and to work, risk has been ennobled by science, and marxism by tracing the evolution of capitalism to its inevitable fate made it clear that work could never automatically lead to the emancipation of the working class; it is therefore necessary to associate work with political activity but this conclusion is in direct contradiction to bourgeois morality

which has idealized work. According to bourgeois ideology developed by the Reformation, for work to become a virtue it must remain pure, that is to say isolated from risk. Risk was attributed either to the new God — the God of Calvin — who by casting salvation on some and damnation upon others stands for fortune and not for justice, or to God's image upon earth, the capitalist. For God, the salvation of men, and for the capitalist, the accumulation of riches has become an enterprise in which the faithful are doomed to work if they want to earn their daily bread and enter paradise. But if instead of submitting to fate man liberates himself from the capitalists he automatically dissociates himself from the Protestant and bourgeois conception of work and is therefore at last free to associate work with risk. By means of a determinist interpretation of history it is not only possible to associate work with politics but also work with enterprise. To the mechanistic salary conception of work we should oppose the dynamic conception of work, as an -enterprise (council of workers). More and more dissatisfied with the conditions of work man is becoming aware of the value of risk; he sees it associated with pure science, with political history, with life in birth accidents. This direct association encourages us to correlate responsibility with all forms of creative work. Our integrity — the atheist's purity —is rooted in fidelity to the Idea, and because our morality is one of creation and not of salvation, to the mystic's belief in purification through sacrifice and to the artist's faith in purification through sublimation (theory of art for art's sake), or through rituals (art for the artist's sake), we oppose risk and responsibility. Risk is the counterpart of discovery — the materialist's initiation. All attempts to revive sacred rites by means of a concoction of anthropological theories (sacralization) and psychological theories (sublimation) serve the sole purpose of rationalizing the fear of those unfortunate intellectuals who hope to avoid the grave implications of reality by castrating the Idea with the scissors of Doubt. Instead of the Church — the laboratory and chants modulated by the passions of the masses! All risks have to be

taken if the exceptional is to be captured. The contents of the tragedy of existence can no more be distinguished from action. The modern poet is no Hamlet; not the statesman alone, the poet also faces the new reality and interprets it in dynamic terms; he struggles for the rehabilitation of the hero; he must become a hero, become one and idolize none. We are not for "heroic literature" either in its epic robes or in the garb of a domestic cult, known under the name of novel. Of all types of literature the most valuable is the mantic, and as in the age of science divination becomes discovery, so the mantic eye of the poet plunges into dreams and traces the course of alienated sensations with the audacity and precision of Rimbaud. But as liberty isolated from the idea of political progress can not benefit the masses — the rule of Pericles and the theories of Plato and Aristotle are a sad proof of this — so mantic poetry must again become prophetic and insight must now follow "the science of perspectives" for art not to remain a form of speech used by a caste of Pharisees to deliver their utterances in the Temple. But against the leaders betraying the ideas they once battled for there is no need to provoke the wrath of the people which would chase the Pharisees out of the Temple, for they have fled before committing sacrilege. In their new role, salesmen of ideas no wider than the hem of a petticoat, they are only capable of arousing mirth.

Confidence in creators can be regained only through common action pursued in the name of an Idea. And "ideas do not fall from the sky"; they develop in the clash of conflicting economic interests. We must not forget that the actual battles are the outcome of crushing defeats —the defeat of the English working class in the General Strike; the repression against the Chinese workers conducted by the Kuo Min Tang; the coup d'état of Dolfuss, the Moscow purges, Hitler's victory; the failure of the Popular Front in Spain and France. Nobody knows where the future battles of Marathon will be fought for the Persians are now everywhere and what we mean by

Greece — the animus without which no further progress can be accomplished — is momentarily confined to very small groups; but they, too, are to be found everywhere. It is only those who are not guided by the light of historical materialism who will let themselves be overcome by sickness at the mere sight of the rough sea of our civilizations. Philosophers they call themselves and sit under a tree near the desert when they should cover their impudent faces with leaves. Poets are not seized by vertigo, they must be inspired by him —Aeschylus. The poet warrior is Promethean.

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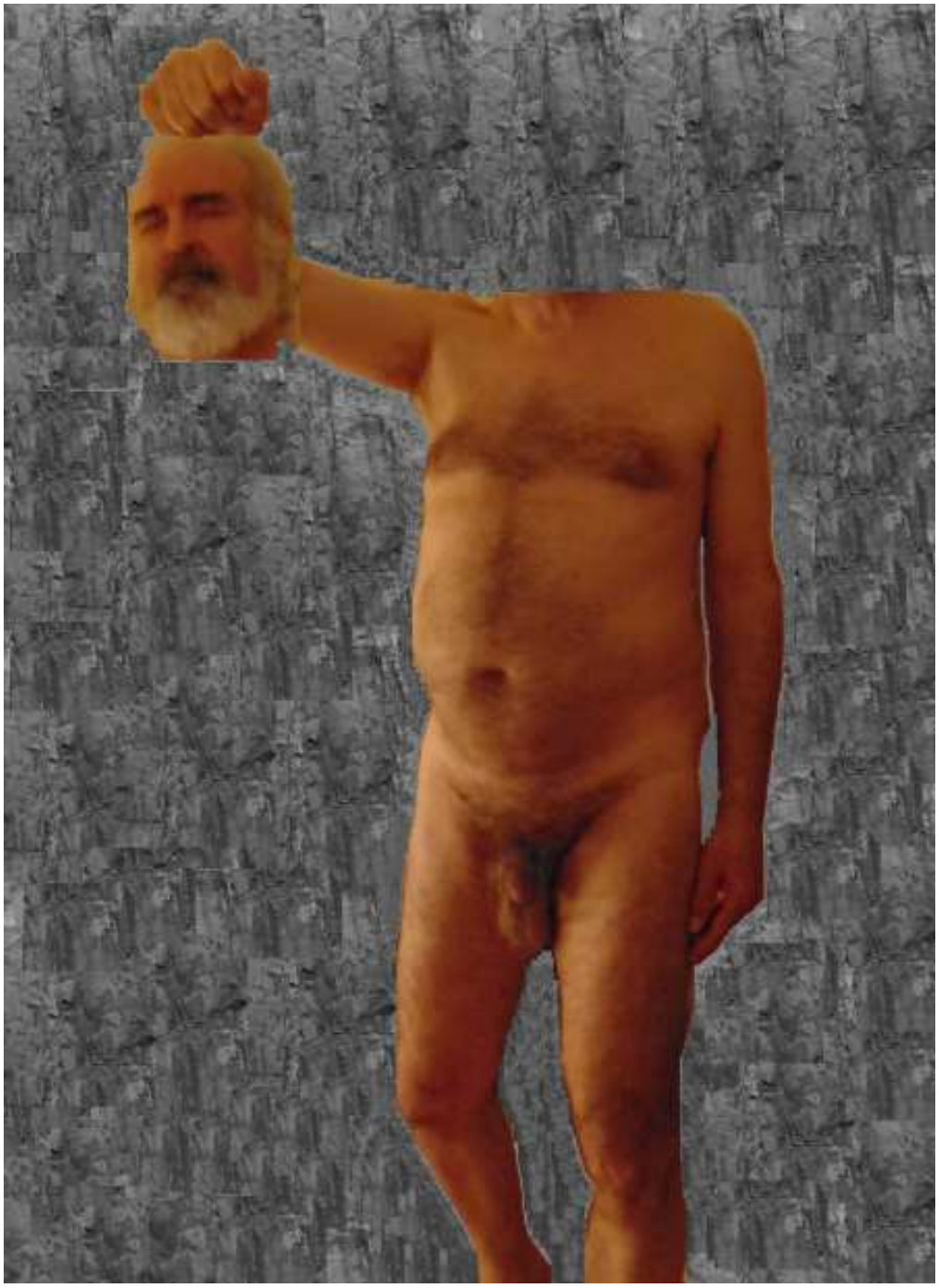
Pictorial: Try not to lose your head!



It’s Easy to Criticize by Kurt Seligmann

There is no painting without method. We know that in the most depersonalized abstract forms as well as in the spongy, smoked, rubbed surfaces a method is concealed having its origin in experience. The interpretation of the accidental and its coordination are of importance to any painter: to describe signifies to interpret. The interpretation and its fusion with the hieroglyph-skeleton of the painting excludes by no means the use of chance elements.

; I think that the question is of small importance, if the pattern guiding the coordination is formed before the painter starts his work, or during its execution. The plan may modify itself during the process of execution. But the plan exists nevertheless a priori, It is born in the vision preceding the art work and its modification during the working process is not only admissible but desirable. The will to form, that primordial force, will modify, transform and twist the image, until it is in full accord with the material requirements of the canvas, until it forms that unity which we impose upon the exterior world.

If I wish to criticize methods and procedures, I criticize first of all myself and I do it in order to clarify my ideas and to give them a propensity.

The plastic means used in some modern works of painting seem to be hostile to any deep and clear space description. Their use apparently excludes that new space the premonition of which enhances our thought and of which we know that it will not be a mirage of atmosphere, nor a simple trompe-l’oeil, nor a linear construction in a renaissance sense. I do not wish to analyze the origin of this need for space representation. However, the early Chirico shows us that space can be more than the

illusion of a third dimension, that it can be a medium of affective expression just as any plastic medium can.

Today there is a profound contradiction between our need for space and the plastic media we restrict ourselves to, media which seem to oppose themselves obstinately to any new space representation.

Space has to be conceived, to be built; its building excludes haphazardness in its foundations. Conception canot reconcile itself with chance.

If I wish to introduce space into my work I must give a minor importance to the chance element. Because the means by which we provoke the accidental do not know another space than a limited trompe-l'oeil.

We can not call creation of space the way we describe a conventional depth in our paintings when we cut out from the profusion of decalcomaniac elements as much as we need for a sky, lake, horizon, or desert. Delimitation is not space. Since cubism we try to pulverize the magic diamond. The enchanted world in which Picasso's three musicians live is only a few feet deep. The sound of their instruments is a praise of claustration, of happiness within the four studio walls. In our epoch of air attacks these four walls may crumble, they do not secure meditation and protection anymore from a world of indifference ...

Our new space seems to exclude chance from invading the canvas before the process of painting. We should stress more the a priori element, the vision anticipating the work. This vision may form itself automatically as in the case of Helen Smith who copied forms presented as realities by her inspired imagination.

The use of the method provoking chance- forms to be interpreted automatically contains a danger, although it liberates psychic forces in need of expression. Liberating on the one hand it impedes on the other, because it leads the creative forces _always through the ‘same canals, thus curbing the immense flight of imagination. The vision anticipating the work is consigned to an inferior rank, or even completely excluded. A conciliation between the two principles seems difficult and the fusion of the two elements painful. The discrepancy between the forms obtained by accident and those conceived a priori is manifest and gives the impression of superimposition.

The element a priori is not for the *Gestaltist* something exterior or impersonal, on the contrary it resides in the deepest strata of personality and transmutes itself with the experiences of the individual. It is constant.

{first published in *View Magazine*, May 1945}

Another Bright Messenger by Henry Miller

Behind the phenomenal world with its featherweight armadas, sleigh-bells, searchlights and mediumistic trappings, lie the arcane realms where creation never ceases. Here the poet builds his laboratory, blind as a mole but moving with instinctive certitude. If his symbols are shoddy they are none the less authentic: they correspond to an out-worn reality.

In the figures and landscapes employed by Max Ernst we see the vestigial traces of a suprasensual world which, like our own sorry world, appears to be on the brink of collapse. The permutations and transmutations taking place in the physical world have their corresponding echoes in the invisible worlds. Sensitive souls pick up the echoes first, thus bringing upon themselves ridicule and persecution. It is difficult for those who have their being in the lower registers to believe that familiar landscapes may within the space of a short lifetime come to resemble mangy mattresses strewn with dismembered human limbs, gory heads like bowling balls and other dispersed relics of the civilized life. It is even harder for them to visualize the possibility of millionaires' sons roaming naked through the woods, plumed like birds, and searching for fodder on all fours — say in Patagonia, or Formosa. So long as we are merely neurotic, nightmares provide interesting material for study.

The chimaerae, the unearthly vegetation, the symbolic episodes, the haunting passages which lead us in the twinkling of an eye from the fabulous to the invisible and frightening realities, in the pictures which Max Ernst has been giving us for the last twenty years, are not dream images any more than they are accidents. They are the product of an inventive mind endeavoring to translate in worldly language experiences which belong to another dimension. If they are horror-laden sometimes

it is not in the familiar nightmarish sense which we are accustomed to ascribe to the functional processes of the night mind. They are compact with wonder and mystery, awesomely real. A glow emanates from them which arises neither from the day world nor the night world. It is the effulgence in which all living substance is bathed and is traceable to the central source of power and light. Within the rock crystal it blazes as fiercely as in the solar bodies. Death does not extinguish it; death strikes only among the ephemeral forms.

The spiritual argonaut scoffs at wings, just as he is contemptuous of inventions which increase the trajectory of a Big Bertha a few more miles. Blind-folded he can pick his way amidst the galaxies with an accuracy denied the man whose eyes are glued to the telescope. Imagination does not gallop or fly — it overleaps, it turns somersaults, it discovers new dimensions. It seeks exits, not extensions and enlargements. It does not work — it plays. To the imaginative mind a "better" life is unthinkable. The varieties of life do not arrange themselves in moral, social or political hierarchies; these orders pertain to the flat, two-dimensional plane. The poet — and Max Ernst is definitely one of the few poets among the painters of our time — strives to bridge the vertical orders, using the suprasensual ladders, rainbows, linguistics and boreal lighting effects which are also the property of the seer and the mystic.

In this effort to span and transliterate it is inevitable that he should traverse the cloudy realm of "fear and trembling" which hangs like a shroud about the active, earnest participants here below. His bewildering transmogrifications, now so familiar to us, take on a new character as we progress from station to station along the way of vital destruction. As our world hangs in shreds, as the beards of our phantom monsters become weirdly affixed to the chins of our angelic hosts, as the

bodies of beasts and men pile up in inextricable confusion, embracing one another in death, and in turn ravished by the machine, the fantastic jumble of poetic invention begins to appear more and more like order and logic, like the clean-cut preview on a small scale of a world-wide drama whose outlines are still obscure to us. How can a fugitive bird make known to the greedy omelette manufacturers the mysterious content of those eggs which are not rotten?

I think of Max Ernst as I first glimpsed him — a bright messenger from the other world seated on the terrace of a French café with a potation of powdered gold within grasp of his avid fingers. Watching his eager lips I strove to read the bird and feather language which he employed like an adept. I always wondered what he was talking about, yet mever dared approach him. His skin seemed to glisten with the dewy agglomerations collected in swift flight. I felt that he was an Intelligence which had borrowed form and substance in deference to the requirements of sidereal politeness. In his awkward moments he seemed like a giant blimp navigating rather helplessly amidst tables, chairs, bottles and bodies of more or less human character. I felt that he was born *dépaysé*, a fugitive bird in human guise, always straining to soar "beyond the exterior world with its wolf dens, cemeteries and lightning conductors." I hoped forlornly to hear him say: "I am wasting time here."

Patch …

This story has a truthful beginning, a sort of a middle and will eventually have a finale … perhaps given sufficient time and inspiration.

The story begins on a dark and stormy night in late February. It was Thursday evening and I was trudging my usual walk home from my office to my Atelier. I was just a block over from my place when I happened upon the *Three Graces*.

They were in an excited state so I hazarded to guess it was someone's birthday. I asked and was right. It was the forty ninth birthday of the shortest of the three.

The tallest of the three, a blonde, enthusiastically declared they had just enjoyed dinner and were now on their way to a local pub. She invited me to join them for some drinks. I knew the pub, which had a reputation, so I politely declined. She had such a look of disappointment, but I could not dispel her disappointment.

A few minutes later when I stepped into my cold and empty Atelier, I tossed my things down at my feet then just stood there for a good minute pondering whether I should stay put or venture out again to join the *Three Graces*. I knew they were already two sheets to the wind. I was curious about them. I sensed the three had history … besides I hadn't been on a night out in ages.

They were surprised to see me walk in to join them. I was happy the pub was all but empty. Off in a corner were a half dozen elderly men playing cards. By the stack of chips it looked like a serious game of poker. This particular public house was not

my sort of place. It was famous for its cheap beer and run down nature. I preferred a public house that could mix a good martini and was more cultured.

The only other patrons in the pub were the three women. They were already hard at work on their beers. It had only been fifteen minutes but they were already on their second round. I was not surprised to see the seat next to the blonde was empty and inviting.

"I knew you would come," she said to me as she ushered me into the empty chair. "What'll you have?"

"If I have a beer this late in the day I will not get a good night's sleep. Can I have a tisane?"

"A what?"

"A herbal tea … a tisane … you know mint tea or something like that."

"You expect this place to have mint tea?" she mocked me.

I shrug my shoulders. She got up and went to order a mint tea for me.

The middle one of the three uttered "who orders mint tea in a pub?"

"I do …" I replied firmly.

The shortest of the three, the birthday girl blurted out "you're weird!"

I didn't like beer to begin with … ale or stout yes … but not beer. This place only served beer by the gallon, and only the low end type. Beside with a tea they would have to serve it in a paper cup and that was more sanitary. I ran no risks. The local health officials had cited the pub for not properly washing their glass wear.

The blonde returned and sat back in her chair. "They have sent someone next door to get you your mint tea."

I turned to her and smiled. "Thanks …"

The blonde continued. "So you decided to join us after all."

"I would be crazy not to come and enjoy the company of three beautiful women."

The three women chuckled. The middle one said "we have known each other since fifth grade."

"Wow!" I said.

"Why wow?" the blonde asked me.

"That's a long time for three girls to stay friends …"

"It is, isn't it!" said the birthday girl.

“I don’t think I have ever had a friendship that has lasted more than a dozen years.” I opined.

“Yup … a lot of water under these bridges.” The middle one uttered.

You might wonder why I used blonde, middle or birthday girl in this story. It is just that, even after chatting for two hours, while I introduced myself to the *Three Graces*, they did not introduce themselves to me. Small wonder … why not? I have yet to figure that out, after all they invited me to join them, or at least the blonde did. I am not sure the other two wanted my company as much as the blonde. The blonde decided to call me Patch.

Patch may have some special meaning to the story. Here too I am unsure.

My mint tea arrived but it was not the bar maid who brought it, but a ‘regular in the bar who was on intimate terms with the bar maid, or so the blonde whispered to me. I whispered back to her “you must come here often to know this …”

The birthday girl was riled. “What are you two whispering about?”

The blonde pointed back at the ‘regular’ with her thumb and the birthday girl smirked and said “oh.”

This prompted the middle to boldly state “in grade five she once burned a pair of her boyfriend’s underwear in a fit of anger,” pointing to the birthday girl.

I volleyed back “… boxers or briefs …”

The three women giggled. My retort was meant to stop that story in its tracks. To be perfectly honest I wasn't in the least interested in knowing why she had done this juvenile act. It must have had something to do with sex and I wasn't interested in the sexcapades of a fifth grader.

Instead, so began the usual twenty questions when women meet an unattached man for the first time here in Vancouver. The women almost always start by assuming the man is gay and it takes some convincing for them to believe otherwise …

In exasperation I said "what do I need to do to convince you I am hetero …?"

Deep down it is not hard to wonder whether women hope all unattached men are gay … but would it be even-handed for me to assume one of more of these three women, who have been friends for four decades, are lesbians. Two were married and had children and one wasn't, the middle one. They probably have shared all their stories about growing up, first love, their sexcapades and all.

I told them I had been married for twelve years and my ex had promised me children before we were married but later admitted she could not have children. I told them the only thing I truly miss in my life is I do not have children of my own.

"You men have it easy …" the blonde exclaimed. "Try pushing babies out of your body … through an opening no bigger than that" she held her hand up making a small orifice with her fingers, "that needs to stretch wide like that" now making a hollow ring with her fingers from both her hands, "… now that is something."

The men playing poker paused for a few seconds to take in our conversation. The blonde noticed this and toned down her voice. "Yes … you men have it easy!"

I turned to her and decided to admire her a bit …"Do you know why God created woman after man?" I whispered. The three women huddled up with me.

"No I don't," she whispered.

"She learned from his mistakes … and won an award for the creation of women."

"Is that so." the middle one said.

"Yes …" I pushed back some more. "You women were created at the last minute of the last hour of the last day of creation … so what are you complaining about?"

They sort of giggle because they could not decide whether I was being serious or being funny.

"You women live longer than us men. When you step back and take everything in … and weigh and measure it wisely … your lives are much better than us men."

We broke up our huddle and they each took turns questioning this.

The birthday girl went first and told me a bit about her job. She was a social worker looking after the needs of young indigenous women on the Down Town East Side of Vancouver, one of the poorest communities in Canada. She told me about a young girl who 'was at risk' that she had been counseling that had 'fallen off her map.' Her

grandmother had died and she had gone back to her little hamlet in Northern BC and had yet to return to Vancouver. The girl was thirteen years old and attending a middle school. Her mother had taken away her cell phone. Texting was the only way the social worker could stay in touch with the girl.

I said that I was perhaps naïve, but isn't the girl where she should be at this moment in her life, with her family consoling her mother. "When she returns to Vancouver if she needs to talk with you she will get in touch with you."

Perhaps I didn't sound convincing but this seemed to me to be a logical appraisal of this little drama. In my mind being a young indigenous girl in the big and bad city (Vancouver does have a reputation) seemed a greater risk to her than being back home with her grieving mother.

The birthday girl took a large quaff from her beer. "What if she doesn't come back to Vancouver?"

Being the optimist that I am I said "I am quite sure she will …"

Next was the middle women's chance to express her angst. She was single, never married … so no children. She was the plain Jane of the three. I had tried to guess what her profession was … service industry … I presumed.

I presumed correctly. She is a restaurateur. She had started out at sixteen as a server, then took a hospitality degree at BCIT, then worked down in Seattle for a few years before returning to Vancouver. I didn't ask and she did not say where she worked. Frankly it didn't matter to me since I no longer dined out that much.

The middle one looked half her age … and could easily be mistaken for a twenty teenager. She had aged much better than the birthday girl, probably because she had few encumbrances in her life and didn't seem to worry that much. Of the *Three Graces* she was the one who looked boyish, sported little A's and no bra.

The middle one was the wallflower of the three and she knew it. It was useless for me to try to draw her into our conversation. I asked her a few innocuous questions which she astutely did not answer. She merely sat there and wanted to listen to what was being said by use three. She left first, begging the late hour and the need to work the next day. The way the other two women reacted to this told me they knew she was bored and that she just wanted to shove off.

After she left the two remaining woman wanted to tell me a thing or two about her failed romances but I feign disinterest because I was not the type to gossip.

I turned to the blonde sitting next to me and started to take up a conversation with her. Any conversation. She had the type of personality that was mysterious. How do you start a conversation with a mysterious lady? She sensed my awkwardness. I took a long sip from my mint tea.

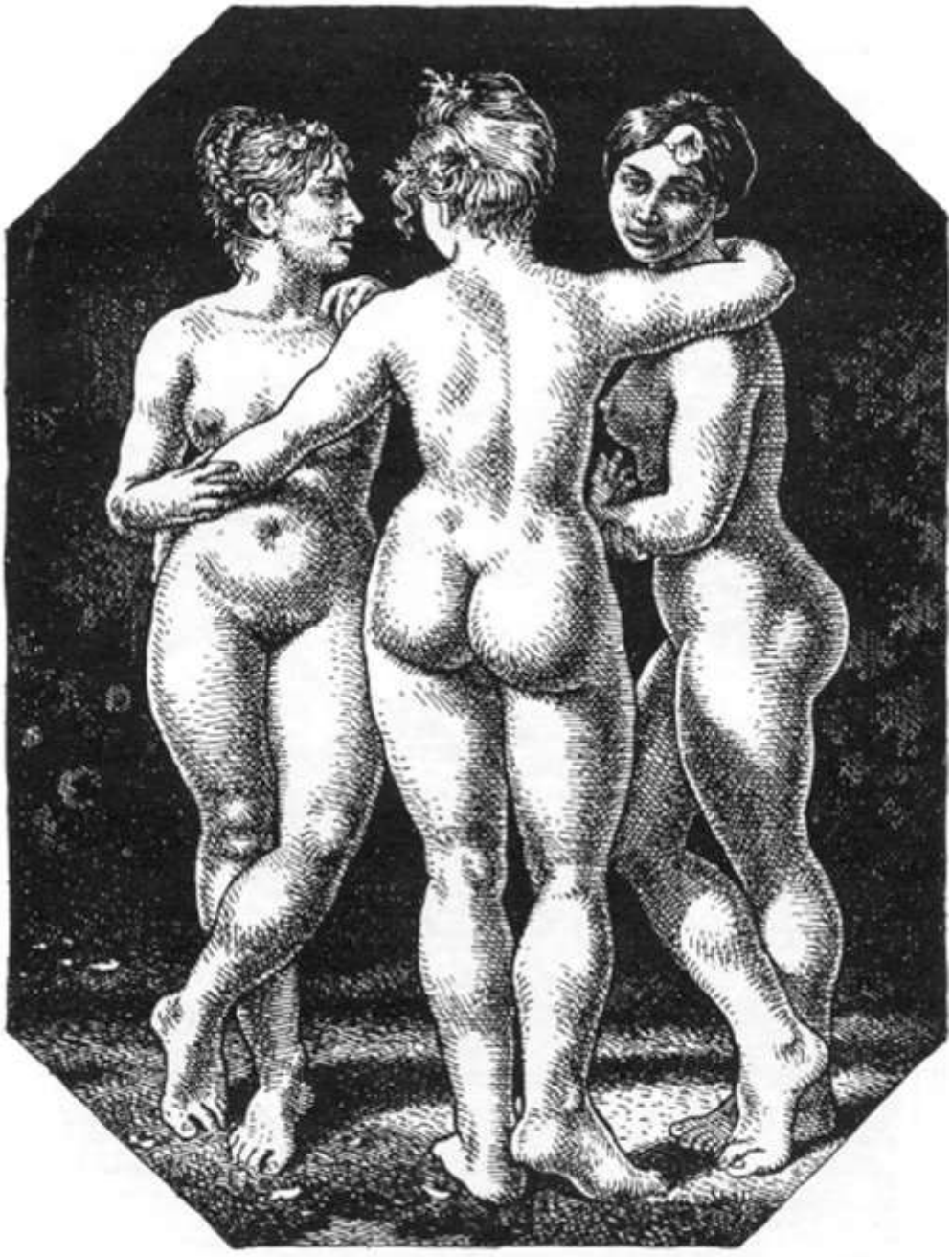
I finally had the courage to ask her something. "What did you invite me to come join the three of you for drinks?"

"We have been celebrating our birthdays together for nearly forty years. I don't we have any new stories to share between us."

I sensed there was a line across which the *Three Graces* would not share information about who they were and what they did. That told me they had had issues with men before, probably starting in middle school. Why else would I had been told about the birthday girl burning her boyfriend's underwear?

What they were saying was in their measure of things men and women cannot be mere friends.

Pictorial: The Three Graces by Robert Crumb



THE THREE GRACES — Copied from REGNAULT

Eros in Art

The Allegory of the Apple

I really can't remember what picture I took of Emily that evening. It was after all fifteen years ago. I vaguely remember I may have gotten her to sit on her legs with her back to me and then did a picture of her back in the iconic Man Ray violin d'Ingre theme. Since she did not wear a bra nor underwear I remember that there was only a thin line of her pant waist.

We talked some more as we waited for her thin line to disappear. I let her talk and I was all ears. It was like open the opening the gates of a water sluice. Emily felt compelled to tell me more about her conquests and her fetishes. It was an eye opener for me listening to her as she said all the fun she had with her '*boy toys*.'

She had a philosophy. Her boys '*came in three varieties*' she said; those that wanted to conquest, those that wanted to be cuckolded and those that were just perverse."

I picked up the camera and set it on a tripod. I asked her "which of the three types she most enjoyed?"

She laughed. "Once you have had a boy inside you it takes away the novelty. So I first ask them what they wanted. If it was conquest, I told them that once they had me they could never had me again."

"And …?"

"Some of the boys would say 'so be it' … but …"

I started to focus on her back. "But what?"

"But … I would drop them there and then. I just didn't want to be someone's conquest or their one night stand."

"So what then?"

"I enjoyed the boys who wanted to be cuckolded and those that wanted to do something perverse."

"Cuckold. You used that word a few times. What does that mean?"

"Cuckold … is when a rooster becomes a hen."

"Oh! You didn't really … you know."

She giggled. "No I didn't. That would be cruel. But there are other things a girl can do to cuckold a boy."

"Really, such as …" I knew she was teasing me, but she was after all the one sitting there naked and I was the one on the other side of the camera.

"I am not going to give away all my secrets. You will have to find out for yourself."

I laughed. "Don't you wish!"

I walked over to her and stood beside Emily. From this angle I could see down across her breasts and down to her tuft of hair. She turned to face me.

"Don't you want to hear about the perverse boys?" She asked.

"Maybe some other time?" Indeed I was curious … but I thought that I had heard enough of her fetishes for one night. Besides it was getting late. I walked back to the camera and looked again through the view finder.

"How's it going on back there?"

"I'm all ready. Are you?"

She nodded. "You sound very tired. Would you prefer we just call it a night and you can go home to bed?" I wasn't keen to continue if she was going to be ornery.

"Get on with it." She snapped. "My knees are beginning to hurt."

I suddenly had an idea. "I want to try something."

"What?" There was a tired skepticism in her voice.

"Don't worry, it is not something weird." I looked down at the camera and noticed it had an electronic option to let the camera adjust f/stop and the like. I pressed the button and the camera came alive, all by itself. " I want to just turn the lights off and have one bright light."

“Oh! I thought … since we have been talking about weird things … that you might do something weird.” There was still tiredness to her voice.

“Why would you say that?” I was a bit defensive.

“You boys are like that, when you see a naked girl. All you want to do is weird things!”

“Not all boys are like that.” I came quick to my defence, then I thought I might have some fun with her. “Besides …”

“Besides what?” She turned on her knees so that she was now nearly in profile. She had a surprised look on her face. It much improved the composition, so I decided then and there to be less Man Ray, lifted the camera and took a photograph. Immediately after I took the shot she lifted a hand to coddle her breast.

I smiled. “It is in our programming to be a bit weird, don’t you think?”

“Really! So what are you saying?” She was intrigued.

“You show us a naked girl and well things go into autonomous mode for boys. We have no control over our physiological responses.” I closed my legs together as I said this.

Emily giggled. “Yes, you don’t do you?”

“It’s not just that.” I pressed on. “There are urges as well.”

“Urges … what kind of urges?” Emily took her hand away from her breast and leaned over, holding herself up with that same hand. She was teasing me, for effect.

I turned off the electronic features on her camera and set it down on the table. I knew if I didn’t do this I would break our cardinal rule and take a second picture. That would probably break the trust between us.

Emily suddenly stood up and walked over to pick up the camera. “I think I want to take a picture of you.” This brashness on her part was quite unexpected. She held her camera in front of her source de vie and just stood there. “Well … are you game?” Emily wasn’t tired anymore but had found herself vital energy.

“This is a bit weird,” I said throwing the whole weirdness thing back at her. “I have never had a naked artist do art with me their naked artist model.”

Emily giggled. “This will be a first for us both.”

“Well …” I stood up from my chair. “There is always a first time for everything.”

I started to walk towards the bathroom. “Where do you think you are going?” Emily jested.

“To the bathroom to get out of my things.” I pointed at the bathroom.

She shook her head, set down the camera and pounced towards me. I knew what she had on her mind and I decided not to stop her. She started with my necktie, loosened

it provocatively and then drew it over my head. As she did this her breasts cascaded back down across her torso. I had never seen such splendor before. I could plainly see that she was aroused.

Then Emily started with the buttons down the front of my shirt, and then the buttons on my cuffs. She left my shirt on as she started on my socks then my pants. She was swift! Obviously skilled in this praxis. I was suddenly chilled as she yanked my pants down my legs. As she did all this she was careful to rub her soft body against me in a planned and notoriously provocative fashion, caressing one of my legs with her right breast and the other with her bare thigh.

Her tease was having the desired effect on my so that when it came to decide between shirt and my jockeys, well I was apparently in full form. She left my shirt on but tugged down the penultimate piece of my clothing. Then she suddenly stopped and tumbled back into a chair giggling uncontrollably.

It had taken Emily less than a minute to render me in this state. There I stood covered by just my plain white shirt, unbuttoned and well hiding nothing.

"You boys are so crazy looking!" She pointed at the best of me when she said this.

"Maybe we are here for you girl's comic relief?" I shook myself slowly from side to side and well … she giggled even more wildly.

"Or for some other relief?" She purred as she said that.

As I looked at her provocative stance I didn't need to ask but asked I did. "Like?"

“Sexual tension … silly!” She set her hands down over her *source de vie*.

“You don’t need us boys to accomplish that!” I laughed I started to sit back down keeping my shirt on.

“Aren’t you going to take your shirt off?” She waved her hand playfully as she said this.

I stopped and obliged her then sat down. “So miss pornographer …”

“Photographer!” Abruptly Emily corrected me.

“Oh … excuse me. Miss photographer! So what shall it be then?” I leaned forward in my chair and put my arm on my knee like Rodin’s thinker. “Standing … sitting … laying back?”

“All three!” She leaned back in her chair, holding on to the arms of the chair and giggled giddily.

The effect her body movement had on me was magical. But then she probably knew the effect she would have on me. It is strange how women’s breasts affect men. Perhaps it is a remnant of our earliest remembrances when we are being suckled at our mother’s breasts. Most men are moved more by the bosom beauty of the top than the hidden mysteries from below.

“I think I want you laying back.” She pointed to the couch. We both stood and started to compose the shot. The first pose didn’t quite work with me on my back and well the backdrop cluttered with hangings on the wall. So I got up and dug out a white bed spread and jury rigged a hanging from the wall and over the couch.

I lay back down and Emily tried to compose a good shot from different angles. But a man’s masculinity is a bit of a distraction when it comes to photography, so I set a hand over myself and well Emily said it still it did not work.

So I rolled over on my side and she began to think of possibilities. “Do you have any fruit?” She asked.

“I might have some apples kicking around.” I was startled and amused at the same time by her question.

“Go get them” Emily asked and so I did.

While I was in the kitchen I dug out a plate to put the apples on and then decided to cut one of the apples in two. I walked back into the Atelier and set the plate of apples down in front of me and resumed my pose. Then I grabbed one of the apples in my left hand and held it forward as if presenting it to the viewer.

Emily lifted the camera to her eye, peered through the view finder. “Won’t you well …”

I shook my head. I knew what she wanted but I was too embarrassed to oblige. She also knew not to push the point, because I was firm in my conviction that I would not let her photograph the best of me.

I half expected her to take a picture but instead she said "your feet .."

I looked down at my feet. "What about my feet?"

"Your feet … The volume is in imbalance. We need something to fill the volume near your feet!" She looked around the room but could not find anything that might fit her need. Then she smiled "I have the perfect thing in my car!" She started to pick up her clothes then changed her mind. I watched as she dashed into the bathroom and came back wrapped in my big green robe. She grabbed her keys and said "Don't move, I'll be right back." And out she dashed from the Atelier leaving the front door partly ajar. I knew this because I could feel the cool evening air come in through the front door and leave through my partially opened sliding door leading to the balcony.

In a moment she was back, closing the front door and lugging a large whicker basket that had a most unique shape. Emily placed the basket at my feet. When she walked back to her camera she kept the robe on and held the camera up to her eye.

To get things perfect she moved the large whicker basket, tilting it ever so slightly towards me. As I watched her do this it suddenly dawned on me what the whicker basket reminded me of.

I knew that this would be the shot and so I made sure I had tucked myself completely in, and crossed my top leg partly over my bottom one to make doubly sure I was not hanging out.

This time she took the picture and as she took it Emily said “I think I will call this one … *The Allegory of the Apple*.”

The Allegory of the Apple

The Process of Inspiration by Jean Cocteau

Often the public forms an idea of inspiration that is quite false, almost a religious notion. Alas! I do not believe that inspiration falls from heaven. I think it rather the result of a profound indolence and of our incapacity to put to work certain forces in ourselves. These unknown forces work deep within us, with the aid of the elements of daily life, its scenes and passions, and, when they burden us and oblige us to conquer the kind of somnolence in which we indulge ourselves like invalids who try to prolong dream and dread resuming contact with reality, in short when the work that makes itself in us and in spite of us demands to be born, we can believe that this work comes to us from beyond and is offered us by the gods. The artist is more slumberous in order that he shall not work. By a thousand ruses, he prevents his nocturnal work from coming to the light of day.

For it is at this moment that consciousness must take precedence over the unconscious and that it becomes necessary to find the means which permit the unformed work to take form, to render it visible to all. To write, to conquer ink and paper, accumulate letters and paragraphs, divide them with periods and commas, is a different matter from carrying around the dream of a play or of a book.

"More light" was the last phrase of Goethe. This phrase assumes meaning when one considers the struggle of Goethe against the shadow and that existence which he consecrated to clarifying the least recesses of his being and to repulsing the charm of the dog and the wolf. I bow before certain scenes of Faust, Part II, that of the fall of Euphorion, for example, in which Goethe reaches the state of grace, in full possession of himself. It would be inexact to accuse an artist of pride when he

declares that his work requires somnambulism. The poet is at the disposal of his night. His role is humble, he must clean house and await its due visitation.

The play that I am producing at *le Theatre de l'Oeuvre*, The Knights of the Round Table, is a visitation of this sort. I was sick and tired of writing, when one morning, after having slept poorly, I woke with a start and witnessed, as from a seat in a theater, three acts which brought to life an epoch and characters about which I had no documentary information and which I regarded moreover as forbidding.

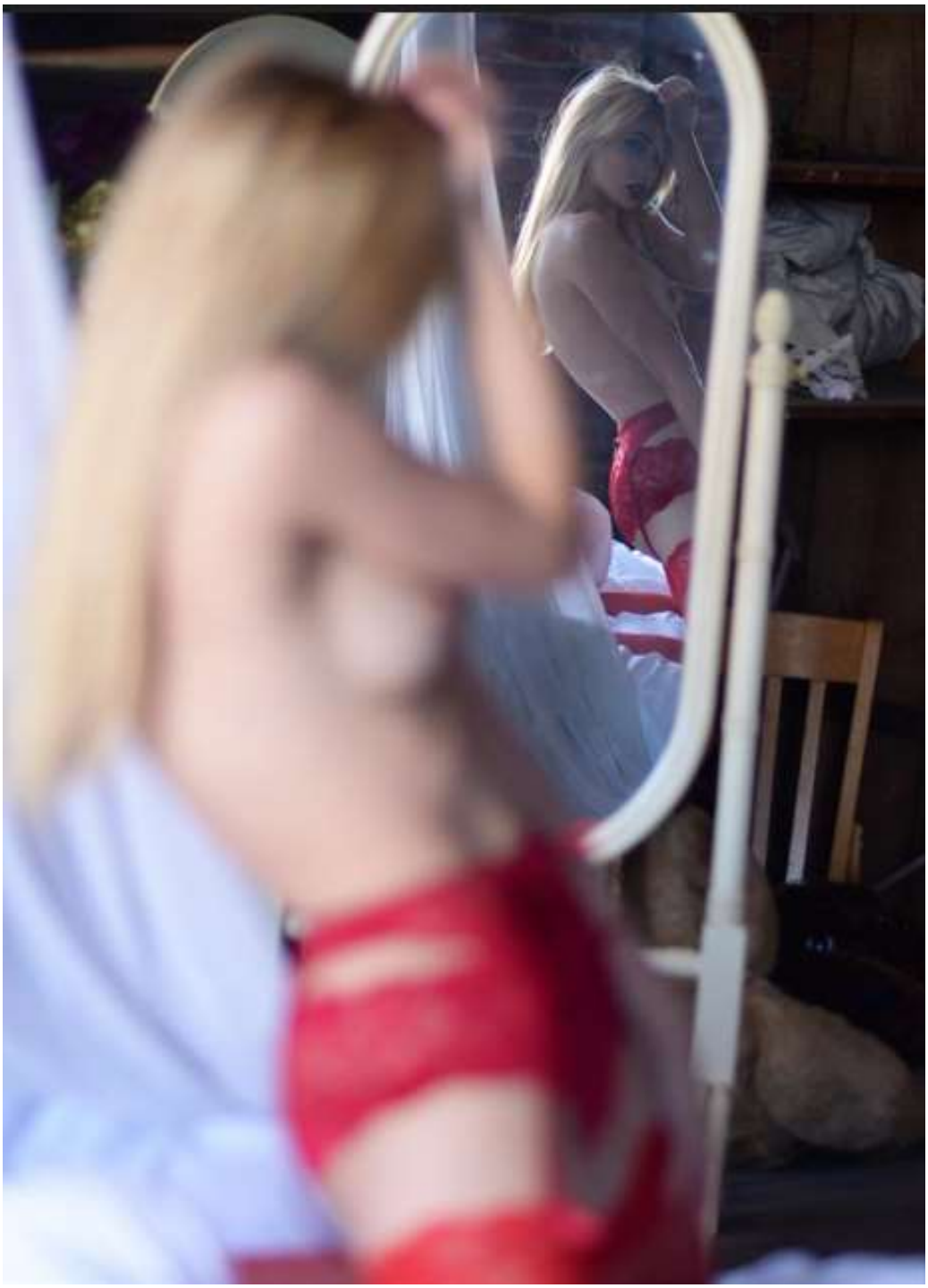
Long afterward, I succeeded in writing the play and I divined the circumstances that must have served to incite me.

{**Editor's Note**: *Cocteau was an opium addict and realized many of his literary ideas in an opiate's state of mind …* }

Pictorial: An Odalisque from 1925 …

The Art of the Selfie by Karen S

These are some selfies of me and my friends. I asked them to send me selfies.



As you can see, selfies can be both personal and beautiful.

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Editor in Chief: Patrick Bruskiewich

Pictorial: A girl and her pussy …

Life Drawing for the First Time … by Megs

[**Vancouver**] I have a friend I have known informally for several years. He has an Atelier which he invited me to visit a few times. He has had an Atelier for nearly twenty years where many artists have come to do art. He intimated that his Atelier was about the figurative arts. Many models has sat for artists in his Atelier.

Now that I am finished university and have more time my curiosity got the better of me and decided I wanted to try drawing the human form. When I emailed him I would come do art he emailed me a link to a book about anatomical studies for artists by Victor Perard. He also asked me whether I would like to be drawn or to draw. I agree to come for a visit, but left that big question unanswered.

His Atelier is warm and inviting. Judging by the paintings on the wall he enjoys both bright color and happy themes. At the centre of the Atelier was a pedestal.

After we settled in he asked me whether I wanted to draw or be drawn. During my first visit to his Atelier I said that we would '*perhaps'* do both. I wanted to draw him first. He said he would sit for me, and would wear a loin cloth … to begin with.

I want to share with you my happiness in drawing him as a figurative model. To be perfectly frank I did not know what to expect. In a moment of abject freedom I noticed a digital camera on a table and asked him whether I could take pictures of him. I was amazed that he agreed!

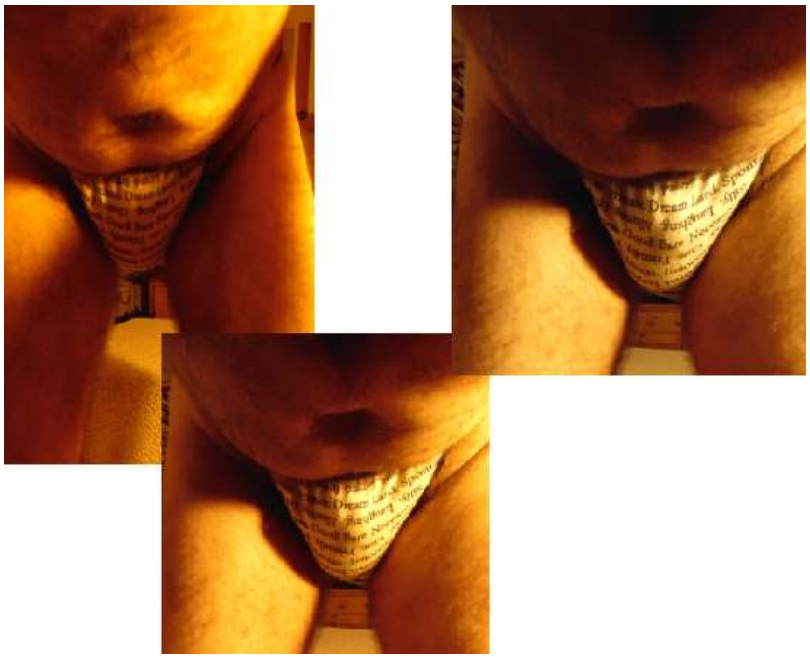
When he left the room to get ready to sit for me I thought he would reappear wearing nothing but his loin cloth, but instead he returned wrapped in a robe.

He sat at the corner of the model's pedestal as we chatted a few minutes about the philosophy of life drawing. He explained that you draw the human form from the inside out, sketching the underlying skeleton first, then the muscles and then finally the outside of the model.

Then we chatted about measurement and perspective. He set out for me a lovely and very detailed anatomical book opened it to a spread that showed the male skeleton. He suggested I start my drawings at his pelvis.

He also suggested we might explore the differences before the male and female form. When he said this my heart skipped a beat! He opened his legs a bit, perhaps unconsciously, or perhaps as a tease …

Then he stood and took off his robe. As he did this I quickly took three pictures. He had hair all over his body … more hair than I had ever seen before on a man.



Click … click … click …. Then he sat back. There was silence for a few seconds. I tried not to stare. Through his loin cloth I could just make out the contour of him.

As he sat back onto the pedestal one side of his loin cloth caught and rolled forward.

This gave me the courage to ask him whether he would simply take the loin cloth off and let me draw him as a figurative model.

He smiled and nodded …

My friend is as old as my father and so I had a bit of curiosity about what an older man might look like. As a little girl I had seen my father naked, but that was twenty years ago and he has put on weight since! I have a boyfriend and I have seen him naked many times. It is easy to know when my boyfriend is excited.

I have also watched as my mother has grown old. I know as women age things begin to droop … I frankly did not know what to expect.

I took in a deep breath … he noticed this!

He could have taken his loin cloth off quickly ...

… but instead he went slowly. What a flirt! My heart was pounding!

Suddenly the gland of his penis popped out from behind his loin cloth. My heart started to race and I could feel my face grow hot. “You are blushing,” he said. He lifted the loin cloth to hide himself away behind a blind.

“Should I stop?” I was speechless and could only shake my head. He continued ...

I noticed right away that he is circumcised. "You're circumcised." I guess I should have caught myself from saying this … it was a bit awkward to say this to my friend … I also heard myself say "My boyfriend is also circumcised." My father was not uncircumcised … that I knew. In high school, after a few dates with different boys … no we didn't go to 'third base' … consciously I had decided to steer clear of uncircumcised boys. Most women prefer circumcised men. Circumcised men have hygienic penises.

Now that his sex was there for me to see I could smell his pheromones ... I was getting very wet … I wondered if he could smell my pheromones.

His penis was smaller than my boyfriend, and a different shape as well. It was as if he read my thoughts when he said he "seemed small … but male models are not supposed to get aroused when they sit for artists." He continued to pull off his loin cloth. Click! I began to feel like *une Voyeuse*.

It is funny how floppy an unaroused penis is! Flop flop … I giggled …

As I giggled I could see he was getting aroused! He was getting much bigger!

He wasn't the only one getting aroused. I crossed my legs so that I could caress my sex without squirming. I could not help but squirm about, I was so aroused!

He dropped his loin cloth at his feet and said "here are where the two sides of my pelvis are" using his hands as the two butterfly shapes that made up his pelvis. He then set his hands at either side of his pelvis, framing his penis.

This brought me back to the moment and to art! As I sketched him, I struggled. He noticed this and suggested I might try using pastels instead of a pencil.

I nodded. He got up and searched about for a box of pastels which he said once belonged to his mother and was as old as he was. As he moved about I had the chance to see the entirety of him. When he sat back down he was at a slight profile which made drawing him easier. As an artist and artist model he knew his stuff.

One of the many things I learned from my afternoon of life drawing is that figurative art is about more than just sex. Life drawing is also about beauty and proportions. My friend was beautiful. He has the body of a man half his age. In many ways he is more beautiful than my boyfriend (I hope he does not read this story. I don't know how he would react …). I love his soft hair!

My friend is also beautifully proportioned. As we both chatted and the ambiance began to become more relaxed I noticed his penis began to hide itself away. I had

seen a man get aroused but I had never seen a penis hide itself away! That caught my fancy and he looked down at himself.

He said he was *turtling*. I giggled. Now that we were relaxed it was then that we started to talk about the difference between the feminine and masculine. I agreed with him that it was easier to draw the feminine. But I told him that wasn't just because I was a women and therefore understood the feminine. I was finding it really difficult to draw the male form!

That afternoon I did two drawings of him, one in pastel and a second different sketch in charcoal.

When I showed him the pastel drawing he immediately noticed that I had drawn him as a eunuch! On their first try at drawing a male figurative, he said that it was common for women artists to draw men as eunuchs … "because this is undiscovered country ... but it's just a cylinder and two ovals." I giggled and said "it's a lot more than just that!" He smiled approvingly.

He suggested I try a charcoal drawing … this time to try not draw him as an eunuch. I will write about my charcoal sketch another time.

After I had finished my second figurative sketch of my friend he asked and I agreed to sit for him but semi-draped. He then got up from the pedestal, wrapped himself in his robe and spent a few minutes studying the two drawings I had done of him. He said both sketches were 'well done'. Then he went to get dressed.

When I sat for him it was for one drawing. I took off my top and sat for a few minutes as he studied my form then he said he could not really see my legs, so I agreed to take off my jeans, but that was all. I was now sitting on the pedestal, legs crossed wearing a burgundy *bralette* and a dark blue pair of my everyday panties. He asked whether I might take off my top but I said I did not feel comfortable doing that. He knew not to ask about my panties. He drew a beautiful figurative drawing of me. (that is a story for another day).

All in all I enjoyed my visit to his Atelier and the chance to draw the male form for the first time. As I left I decided I was going to ask my boyfriend to sit for me.

I can't trust myself to come a second time to my friend's Atelier for I know the second time I visit if he asks me to sit I may decide to dispense with both my top and my bottom … how would I explain that to my boyfriend?

Pictorial: Some Inspiring Art

A torso of a woman

An Italian Evening

I like doing new and exciting things. Not all people are like that, but I am. I particularly enjoy doing things that are creative and artistic. That is why I enjoy writing so much, and also drawing and on occasion painting, when I feel inspired, or have the energy (for being creative and artistic requires a great deal of mental energy) and of course when I have the spare time. But I rarely have spare time …

I sometimes sit as an artist's model outside of the Atelier, but only when people ask me to sit for them on special occasions. Forced to some degree by my personal circumstances, and by the fact I live in one of the most expensive cities in North America, Vancouver, I live an active and productive life. The people in *Lalaland* (what Vancouver is described as in some circles) are very individualistic and narcissistic and well, half the time, half of them are high on one addiction or another … well you get the drift.

Me, I am high on life itself. I never touch the stuff … There is nothing better for your body than endorphins, the endogenous morphine that we ourselves produce when we live a happy and wonderful life. I do creative and artistic things partly because it is a compulsion, and partly for the endorphin high these fun things bring me. Besides, we have only one life to live and it should be lived to its fullest. My circumstances are that I live in chronic pain, and life has taught me the best and ultimately only way to overcome chronic pain is with constant pleasure. Every day when I get up out of bed in the morning I think of all the fun and pleasurable things I will do that day and this helps to get me started. That and my one and only daily cup of coffee. Every day for me is an adventure. I also search for fun things to do.

Recently I came across an ad on an internet bulletin board for an artist's model, which was a curious sort of ad because the sitting was for a private party and the duration was only an hour. Usually such calls are for studio work and for session of between two or three hours. Being an experienced artist model I was curious and so I answered the call.

As it would turn out a thirty-some Vancouver couple were having an Italian theme supper and wanted someone to sit for an hour after dinner so that they and their four guests could do some drawing, in the Renaissance style. The husband was organizing this as a surprise for his artistic wife who was now burdened with a baby and domestic life. When he told me this, I agreed to sit that evening and even suggested that I could be Michel Angelo's David if they had something I could stand on.

And so, a Thursday evening in mid-March I was on my way across town to be an artistic fancy. A fancy is a caprice or whim. It is imagination and imagery. I thought this sitting to be both mysterious and exciting at the same time. In the inside I felt different than if I were just another model for just another life drawing class. This evening's caprice would be something totally different. It would be some artistic fun.

I arrived about a half-hour early for the 8 pm sitting and so I walked up the street and back, passing a nice little fashion house tucked away on a side street. Since I am wanting to start a fashion line in the style of Coco Chanel (simple designs made in white and black) I logged away the locale. Vancouver, despite its silliness, is at the cusp of becoming a truly Cosmopolitan city. The one thing that will help this city become Cosmos is a better fashion sense. Lulu lemon gym wear just doesn't

cut it, especially one holding in the bulges of the indulgences that Lalaland seems so bountiful of. And we have endured enough of the camel toes …

The women in Vancouver are strange creatures. They want to be noticed, but don't want to be acknowledged, unless they are the ones doing the acknowledging. That's tough on the rest of the world. It's a mix of indulgence and entitlements.

That thought … indulgence and entitlements … crossed my mind just as I walked to the front door of the simple old style three story apartment building. I buzzed the appropriate apartment at exactly 8 as arranged and Robert (not his real name) answered and said he would be right down to let me in. A moment later he appeared. Robert was wearing a lovely Sinatra style hat and greeted me warmly. As we walked up to his second floor apartment he quickly explained what was up. Nervously, he said he had told his wife and four guests to expect "a surprise for an after dinner treat." I smiled warmly, hoping this would give him some needed courage.

When we arrived at the door of his apartment he hesitated, put a finger to his lips and quietly said "I will let you into the bathroom to the left to let you change." I nodded and whispered "it will take me two minutes to change into a loin cloth and robe" then we were in.

The small lobby to his apartment was empty. There was a small kitchen to the right and the bathroom to the left. I ducked into it and locked the door behind me. The bathroom was full of practical familial things. It was small and I had brought a shoulder bag with a robe and a loin cloth. The bag was big enough to store my things while I sat as the model.

It took me about two minutes before I was ready and right on queue there was a knock on the door. I hadn't yet put on my robe and opened the door expecting Robert, but in fact there in front of me was standing a tall woman with long blonde hair wearing a blue and white close fitting dress.

She smiled at me. "I was just checking …"

"What?"

"Robert said he had arranged a model … I was just making sure you were male." When she said male she looked down at my loin cloth. As she did this I could see her irises grow wide and her bosom become more pronounced.

"I usually start a drawing session with the loin cloth on …" I said to her, "and then let the artists decide when I should take it off." She smiled when I said "take it off."

She leaned forward and whispered into my ear. "I do hope you take it off …"

I started to remove the loin cloth for her when she stopped me with her hand and whispered "not now … but later." I had already flopped out and her hand was a finger's width away from the best of me. She blushed.

In the background I heard Robert say "Satisfied honey?" She looked up at me and smiled.

I tucked myself back into the loin cloth and whispered back to her …"I will take it off during the second set."

I looked deep into her eyes as she said "Coming dear …" I quickly grabbed and put on my robe and tied it in the front. She waited for me and then I followed her through the kitchen and into the living room.

I had not felt this near the door, but the apartment air was hot and heavy. There were Robert and his four guests sitting passively on a couch and two chairs. The drapes were drawn and so you could not see out onto the balcony, and the neighbors across the street could not see in either. That was fine by me, for while I did not mind an artistic audience I did mind voyeurs.

My arrival was met with some *ahhhs* from the guests, and so Robert stood up and introduced me and said that they would be *doing art* for the next hour. That was my queue to step up onto a small pale blue ottoman that would serve as my pedestal.

I took off the robe and stood up on the pedestal. I registered the looks of disappointment in the faces of the two women when they saw that I was wearing a loin cloth. While Robert got them started on the first of four sets, a two minute warm up sketch, his wife retired to the kitchen to tidy up after the dinner.

On the folding doors to the closet opposite the kitchen were full length mirrors and as I stood there for the first set I could see that the wife was looking up at me every dozen or so seconds, and with each glance her eyes were taking more of me in for longer.

At the end of the first set Robert called for his wife "leave that and come and do some drawing." I looked up at her and saw that her face had grown a deep red. She looked up at me and said "In a minute dear.

For the second set, a five minute pose, I turned around and then said "does anyone object if I ditch the loin cloth …" Behind me again there was some *ahhhs* from the guests, and a female voice said, "this will be fun."

And so began the second pose, with me standing with my back to the five artists and with me stretching my right leg back and bending the other knee in a tension pose that is popular with sculptors. Out of the corner of my right eye I could see the table being cleared in the dining room of the dinner dishes. I turned my head and saw that as she came to the far side of the dinner table she glanced up at me for an instance, which in my pose was enough for her to see the best of me hanging clear of my body. I winked at her and noticed she saw my wink. Then she went back to what she was doing. The five minute pose took forever to complete.

Then I leaned down and picked up my robe, placed it in front of my body and turned to face the five artists, and the wife who was now standing there at the edge of the kitchen. "Do you want me covered, or uncovered?"

There was a straw vote, the two men saying *covered* while the two women artists saying *uncovered*. Who was going to break the tie? Then Robert looked over his shoulder at his wife and smiled. He said nothing. She said "… *uncovered*." She then turned away and went back into the kitchen.

And so I drew the robe over my left shoulder and took up the pose of Michel Angelo's David for the third set, a twenty minute drawing session, turning my head to face in the direction of the mirror in the closet. The five other artists got down to drawing me. From within the kitchen I could see she was watching me as I stood there.

Out of the corner of my eye I could see the five artists at their pencils. Robert was clearly tracing out my contour. The man sitting next to him was drawing big circles and his date sitting next to him was drawing my face, while at least she was trying to draw my face but I sensed she was a tad distracted. Sitting next to her was the other fellow who was obviously not into the whole drawing thing … and sitting by herself in a chair at the far end of the living room was a heavy set woman wearing a pink baseball cap and pink jersey and she seemed to be getting into the spirit of the evening.

I stood silently listening to the scratching of the pencils. Then the distracted woman asked me "do you do this often?"

"Do what?" I queried.

"Stand naked in front of total strangers?" Her comment elicited a laugh from the guests.

I toyed with her. "When you sit as an artist's model *vous etes un objet d'art et pas juste un nus* …."

"Huh …" She obviously did not speak French.

“When you sit as an artist’s model … *you are an art object, and not just a nude.”*

“And how do you feel?” She was indeed curious.

I smiled and tossed back to her the comment “you should try it sometime.”

Her date turned to her and smiled and she turned to him and giggled. “Don’t you wish!”

I continued, “it is enjoyable to bring happiness to artists.” As I said this the woman in the kitchen’s head shot up and she stared at me earnestly. Then she set down the kitchen cloth she had in her hand and entered the living room, standing behind her husband as he drew. Alternately she looked down at his artwork and up at me. I could see she was very aroused.

I tried not to reciprocate in my arousal and had to close my eyes and think of grey cold concrete to keep myself from becoming erect. There is nothing more embarrassing for a male artist model then to have the full splendor of his arousal.

I was partly successful and was only saved the full embarrassment by the fact the twenty minute pose was up. Gladly I sat down for the final pose, as Rodin’s Thinker. With this set she joined her husband and her guests for the final twenty minute sketch. She pulled up a chair and sat next time me as her husband gave her a pencil and a sketch pad. Then we started.

I now sat turned towards the woman in the room. It just turned out that way, nothing more. I kept my legs together just enough that the best of me was propped up onto the inside of my thighs. I had my right fist up against my forehead and was looking down at the best of me. While four people in the room saw my contour, two saw my masculinity.

Out of the corner of my eye I could see her sketching me. Her husband then said, "let this last drawing be one where you do not pick up your pencil off the page as you draw." She turned to him and said "this will be hard," but he insisted.

She turned back to me and continued on with her sketch. She was sketching my masculinity by drawing parallel lines varying the distance between each line to provide a cylindrical shape. Then she started to draw the tip of me, scrolling ever so gently back and forth. I swear I could feel the motion of her pencil being mirrored across the realness of me. I was aroused and started to drip ...

Then she drew the line up my thigh, down along the outside of one leg, around the knee and back then started up the torso to my shoulder. Her pencil was moving frantically across the page as she filled my volume with significant lines. Then she did my shoulders and head, my fist and arm and then down the other side of me with a confidence that was almost frightening.

She did not lift her pencil once as she continued to fill the page with the sheer volume of me. By now Robert has stop drawing and was watching her intently. It was as if she was devouring me with the tip of her pencil. The others continued on oblivious of the little drama that was playing out in front of them.

“This is fun!” she said as she neared the completion of her drawing. I was amazed at her work of art. She was evidently an artist in her own right, perhaps the only real artist in the room. I felt warm inside and I throbbed, for it became evident that from her vantage point she had been staring down over my thigh and at the best of me as she was drawing. In fact she had the best view in the house.

Then he husband said “time’s up!” Startled she looked up at him and asked “can we do another drawing?”

“Maybe some other time. Time’s up. We had only agreed on an hour.”

I grabbed my robe and drew it across me as I stood and then awkwardly put the robe on and said “I will go get dressed.”

Robert then said, “let us thank our model” and the guests began to clap. I smiled and said “I had the easy part, you had the hard part.” As I said ‘hard part’ I noticed a smirk on the wife’s face. The double entendre had not escaped her. She looked up at me then turned her back and went back into the kitchen. Robert was too busy chatting about the drawings with his guests to have noticed the smirk.

I made my way to the bathroom and stopped for a second near the kitchen. The wife was sitting back on the countertop her arms steadying herself on both sides. “Are you ok?” I asked her.

She looked up and nodded her head emphatically. I took a short step into the room and saw that the front of her dress with wet with her arousal. I took another step to her and as I did this I drew open my robe. She looked down and realized that she

was not alone in her arousal. She lifted her skirt up to her hips and then drew off her panties. The tuft of hair between her thighs was soaked through. "I came …" she whispered. "This has never happened before." She kissed me on the cheek and gave me her panties. "I want to see you again."

She said this looking past me at the mirror at the end of the kitchen. Her husband still had his back turned to us. I did up my robe and leaned forward and whispered my email address into her ear. Then I turned and went into the bathroom. I was throbbing. It was crazy what we had just done, but no one was the wiser.

It took me a few minutes to calm down and dress and when I opened the door there was Robert waiting to pay me for my sitting. His wife reappeared from their bedroom wearing a new dress. She looked up at her husband and said nonchalantly "I spilled something on my dress."

I smiled knowingly. Then Robert asked me about the added cost of getting to their place. "Five bucks I said …" She looked up at me and with a twinkle in her eyes said "give him an extra twenty."

"I don't mind the five bucks … but if you want to throw away money …" She pulled another twenty from her husband's wallet and handed it to me.

Just as she did this the women who sat opposite me walked past me to the bathroom. "Thanks for sitting for us," she sang gleefully. "It was wonderful."

“Yes … it was wonderful,” the wife said “perhaps you shall come sit for us again sometime?” I nodded and she turned and walked through the kitchen back to the living room.

As I left I wondered about so many things. And sure enough a few days later I got a nice little email from her. Her name was Serena and she wanted so much to see me and do some art together.

I said yes.

What else could an artist model do for an aspiring artist but say yes … but that is a story for another day!

L’Origine de la Guerre by Keiko

Female Tapestry – 100 Different Women

Pictorial: The Roman Spearman

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